Encounter

October 1977 80p

Liberty & Terror

CONOR CRUISE O'BRIEN on the Illusions of Violence and the Delusions of Liberation . . . . WITH a Report from Germany on the "Terrorist Scene" after the recent political murders

Whose Taxes for What Art?

ROY FULLER explains his resignation from the Arts Council in a critique of official patronage

Raymond Aron

My Defence of our Decadent Europe (II)

Philip Purser

The Critic as Hero

A. J. P. Taylor

Historian's Credo

Shirley Robin Letwin

Dworkin's Law

Hugh Thomas

Carrillo

Edited by Melvin J Lasky & Anthony Thwaite

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The proof is in the reading.

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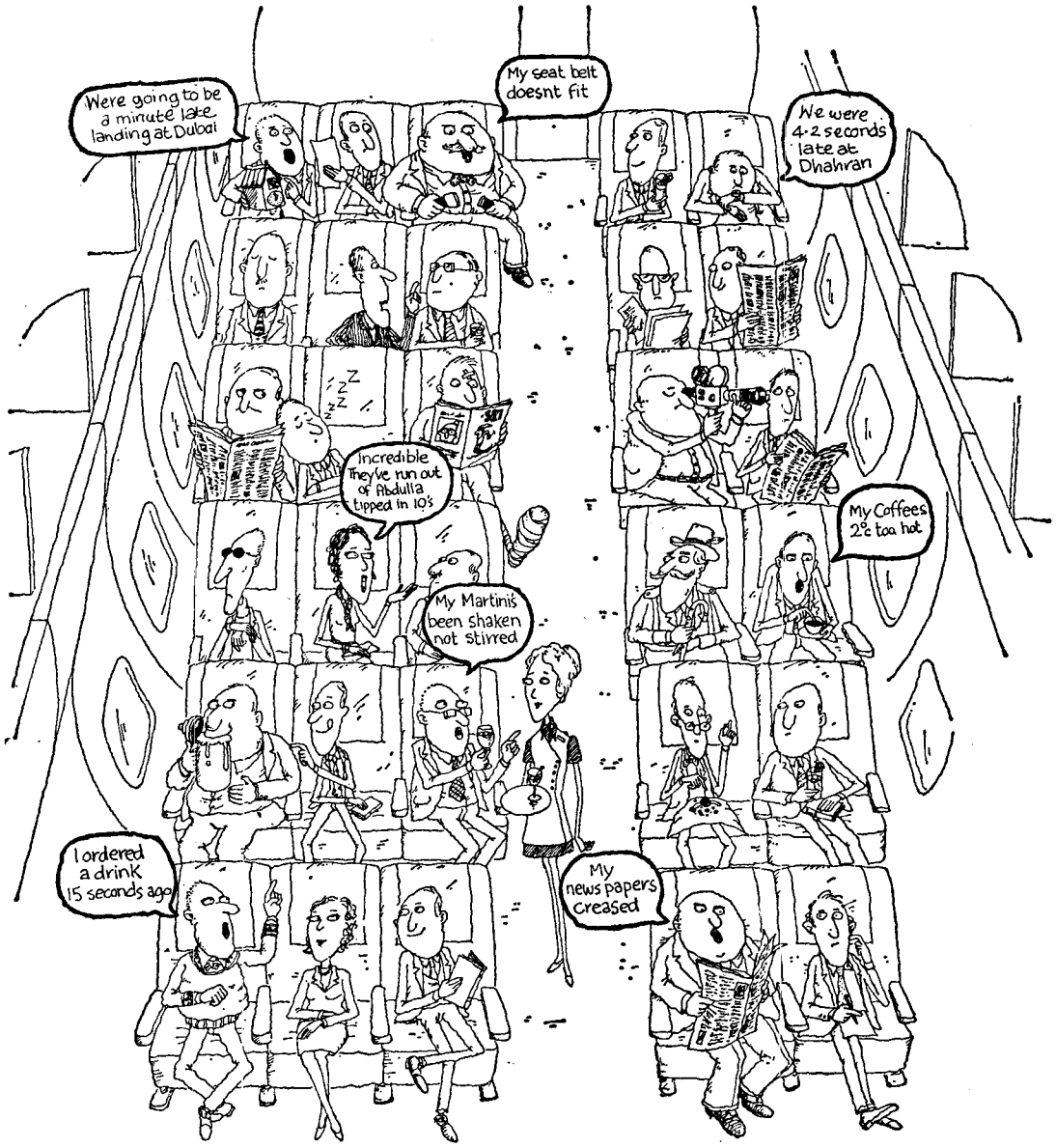
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Philip Purser

The Critic As Hero

CAN IT REALLY be twenty years since the first, and last, Critics' Fieldcraft and Adventure Course at Aucheimfibhean in the wilds of Sutherland? The bluff, walrus-moustached impresario Henry Sherek was undoubtedly behind it. As he had several times impressed on me when I briefly worked for him,[1] he had been chief instructor at a weapon training school during the war and retained a great admiration for the military virtues. The critics, he had thundered as he skimmed through the reviews, were an effete lot who brought whore's-closet values to the theatre. What they needed was a little toughening up.

Somehow he had prevailed on the newspaper proprietors to nominate candidates, mostly from the ranks of the theatre critics plus one or two from music and film. On the fringe of what was still regarded as a rather inferior discipline, *i.e.* television reviewing, I would have been perfectly safe but for a baleful combination of circumstances. The *Daily Mail* had sent me back to its Edinburgh office for a month to cover the opening period of Scottish Television, first of the smaller regional companies to go on the air. As this coincided with the Edinburgh Festival I had no complaints. Once I'd drummed up my daily television piece I was free to enjoy the cultural whoopee. Unfortunately the Press lords had thriftily chosen a date for the Course immediately following the Festival, when most of the critics would already be halfway to the killing ground; and as the day drew near and a lucky few of the intended victims were able to feign illness or otherwise wriggle out, to be in Edinburgh and be any sort of critic was to be at risk.

"I've been away a month already", I screamed down the phone to London after the news had been broken to me by Telex, "and I'm only just married."

"That's show-business", said Bill Hardcastle, at that time assistant editor of the *Mail*, later to be an eminent broadcaster. It was one of his standard lines for ending all further discussion.

"I haven't any outdoor-type clothes."

"Buy some." He added his alternative line for ending all further discussion: "Put it on expenses."

The one compensation was that Fred Majdalany, the paper's film critic, was also going—evidently Lord Rothermere had been a keen subscriber to the scheme. Fred was rather a hero of mine and when he offered me a lift north in his ancient Rolls I might have become reconciled to the whole idea had he not also been taking Philip Hope-Wallace of the *Manchester Guardian*. I hasten to add that I quickly got to know and like Hope-Wallace too, but at the time, lolling in the back seat and keeping up a running monologue in what I thought a very affected voice, he made it even harder to determine the appropriate attitude to bring to the next few days. On the one hand it was all a nonsense and one ought to be amusingly mutinous; on the other . . . well, Fred had been an infantry major in the war, awarded the Military Cross, and one didn't want to forfeit the respect of his kind.

"The critic as hero", Hope-Wallace mused, "—not a concept frequently encountered, one must admit." He sipped champagne from a picnic cup, having thoughtfully had the North British Hotel pack two bottles in ice. "But there was Ralph Hill, you know,

[1] See "Mutiny on the T. S. Eliot" in ENCOUNTER, April 1977.

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music critic of your paper indeed, who died in a taxi after phoning over his last notice, and Agate slogging away through the night while the debt-collectors hammered at the door, and the music critic in Munich, poor fellow, who was murdered by the Nazis in the Roehm purge. They had confused him with someone else of the same name, like Cinna the Poet and Cinna the Conspirator in *Julius Caesar*, so I suppose you could say it was not an entirely heroic fate, except that his protests he was a critic may have spurred the assassins on, as happened with Cinna. 'Tear him for his bad verses, then', they growl when Cinna objects that he is not the Conspirator, just a poet. Perhaps the critic as man of action should be the aim, though Agate always insisted he was stupid when he was fit. What do you think it's going to be like at this place? Cold baths and porridge and a compulsory postcard every morning from George Richards[2] of Poole, Dorset?"

IN FACT, Aucheimfibhean Lodge, as it finally beckoned to us through clear evening air, looked reasonably welcoming, with a wisp of white smoke streaming from the tallest of the granite chimneys that rose above the battlements and steep slate roofs. After the narrow, coarse-metalled roads of Sutherland, the old Rolls sighed contentedly on the gravel drive. Inside, we were greeted by the pleasant smell of peat fires and the smiles, cheerful, or uncertain, or relieved, of earlier arrivals. Most I knew by reputation rather than acquaintance, but I recognised one or two younger contemporaries, including Philip Oakes, Peter Forster and the pink face and already thinning yellow hair of Robert Robinson, later to be the television luminary but at this time a columnist with Kemsley newspapers.

Everyone was making nervous jokes and trying to find out what lay in store. Who else to come? What were the staff like? There were echoes of first days in service units, first days at university. Then into the focal space in front of the great baronial fireplace stepped a figure whose carriage and watchful eye proclaimed him to be someone removed from the rest of us. He was perhaps thirty-five years old. He said, "Welcome, gentlemen. My name is Steele and I'm in charge here. I hope you will all achieve what I propose we achieve, and at the end of it feel due satisfaction, and benefits."

He paused for a moment while he calmly surveyed us. "The critic's job, I understand, is a lonely one. He is the scout sent ahead of the great army of theatre-goers and music-lovers and those, er, who go to the cinema. He sends back the information they crave—no, more than that; the appreciation on which they base their own opinions of the work in question. And, as some of you need no reminding"—his eye sought a suitably martial figure—"what is the soldier's training but constantly to make an appreciation?"

The steady grey eye picked on me, looming up stringily at the back of the group. I looked away but not before feeling faint, absurd, boy-scout stirrings. "Right", said Steele. "If we could just make sure everyone is here." He ticked the names off on a clip-board. "Major Majdalany? Major Shulman? Commander Lambert? Ah, welcome aboard, sir. I'm a Marine if that is any consolation." He worked his way down to the last names on the list. "Mr Grier? Mr Magnusson? Mr Purser?"

"Sir", I snapped. How it happened I'm not sure to this day. I went pink with mortification and Derek Granger of the *Financial Times* turned and gave me a perplexed look, but if they noticed, the others only smiled. There was in any case the distraction of the last name of all to be called.

"Mr Tynan", said Steele.

"Who?"

"Tynan. Mr Kenneth Tynan."

"Oh, you won't get *him*", said Granger, amid a chorus of derision at the very idea.

"That's for sure", added Milton Shulman.

"I see", said Steele quietly. "A defaulter. We will have to look into that."

Tynan's absence remained a topic for envious speculation up to and during dinner, an excellent meal of fresh salmon, roast capercailzie, fruit and cheese, accompanied by a Klusserather Brüderschaft and, J. W. Lambert pronounced, a really fine Château Cantenac-Brown.

"One hears David Astor was keen that he should come", said Peter Forster.

[2] A famous scourge of reviewers, now resident in Chepstow, Gwent.

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"It is unlike him to forgo any opportunity to show off", chipped in Robert Robinson, "even one as barmy as this."

"But honestly, Bob", said Oakes, "can you imagine Ken charging over the assault course? Or enjoying bayonet practice?"

"He enjoys it enough", said Derek Granger acidly, "when it's called bull-fighting."

OVERHEARING THIS, a cheerful sergeant-majorly person known as "Staff" called out, "In the Commandos we was taught to kill and butcher a sheep in the field. Some of the lads never did get the hang of it. What a mess!" With a taciturn Highland ghillie by name of Mackay he completed the instructional team on the course. We met them again in the morning for the start of work. Steele and "Staff" wore track-suits, not then such familiar garments as today, Mackay the traditional tweeds and leggings of his calling. The critics were decked out in random mixtures of old flannels, tweed jackets, ancient battledress and thick pullovers. Divided into two parties, the over- and the under-forties, we jogged over along sheep trails, puffed up a bit of mountain that rose behind the Lodge, scaled a few crags and constructed a little bridge across a burn whose peat-brown waters splashed their way down to the River Naver. Some of the wags pretended to distrust it, and having—as a former sapper—rather taken charge of this task, I felt unaccountably offended. "Och, it's strong enough", said the Ghillie. "We uist to take the gentlemen over yon old sheep bridge, for a test of confidence, the Captain termed it. Now that was an adventure, but they say it is no longer quite safe, so it is out of bounds."

"I'm sure we could manage it", I said.

"Speak for yourself, my good fellow", snapped young Bernard Levin, but others backed me up. Looking back, it was rather creepy how we slipped back so unresistingly into the ethic of boarding school and playing field and officer training unit. On only the second day I found myself competing aggressively against Magnus Magnusson. Today another celebrated television performer, he was at that time still a writer on the *Scottish Daily Express*, and would keep harking back to exploits together when I was on the *Mail*'s Scottish paper. Couldn't he see that I had put provincial journalism behind me, and certainly didn't want new metropolitan friends bored by reminiscences of what old Gordon said to the Fiscal that time in Bathgate? Besides, he insisted on lecturing us all on matters in which, as a Scotsman or an Icelander or whatever, he believed himself to be the expert.

"Early Iron-Age", he pronounced when we came to a litter of old stones which the Ghillie said was an ancient burial mound. And later, when panting and harassed by midges we struggled up to a hilltop broch, or fort, Magnusson was still keen and observant. "See: they even had their own fresh water supply." He pointed to a spring welling out of the rock just below the summit. "And gosh! Look how they could command every path for miles. What sort of people were they, one asks?"

"Oh, for heaven's sake, Magnus", I shouted. "We're living in the Twentieth Century, not the minus-Fifth. We're journalists. These old sticks and stones will get you nowhere!"

But back at the Lodge all irritations would be smoothed away in the satisfaction of having survived another day together and the rewards of the evening. "Soaking in the bath", Peter Forster would put it, "trying to remember what Harold Hobson said about *Ardèle* and not caring in the least that one cannot—"

"Looking forward to dry clothes", someone might interject.

"The first drink", someone else would offer.

"—One has to admit it is *rather* pleasant."

From being a source of envy, Ken Tynan's defection became the occasion for feelings of superiority. "Gentlemen in England now abed shall think themselves accurs'd they were not here," Peter Forster quoted, not altogether sardonically. Then on the third evening Steele was called to the telephone and, as he returned with a faint smile on his face, it was noticed that he glanced at the empty chair at the end of the table. The word spread like wildfire. Tynan was coming after all! Indeed, he was on his way. Beyond this one fact the details were conflicting. He had demanded to be met at Inverness, or was it Wick? He was flying up in a private plane loaned by Herbert von Karajan. He was

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being driven up by the playboy racing driver, the Marquis de Portago. He had insisted on bringing his wife, his agent, his dentist.

The truth, as it passed with equal rapidity round the breakfast table next morning, was more remarkable than the most rococo invention. He had arrived perfectly prosaically, by train to Lairg and thence by ancient Humber taxi charged to *The Observer*. He had brought with him neither wife nor ancillary, but was accompanied by a perfectly outrageous friend. Steele, it was said, had been obliged to rouse the housekeeper to prepare a room for the unexpected guest in the staff wing away from the sleeping critics. Why? Who was it? Philip Hope-Wallace, always the best-informed gossip-broker, savoured the titbit he had to impart.

"Oh, come *on*", we screamed.

"Can't you guess? It is . . . Diana Dors", he said at last.

NO BOMBSHELL could have exploded to more effect. Everyone knew about this startling platinum-blonde who had famously posed for an album of 3-D pictures by Roye, the photographer, whose wild parties by the river at Maidenhead were endlessly reported, whose flamboyant sexuality was distinguished from that of others of her kind by a cheerful self-mockery. Of course! Tynan had interviewed her for a now-defunct popular magazine called *Everybody's* during a brief period between jobs when he had been forced to scratch a living like any other Grub Street freelance. "You should have come yesterday", she had told him on the set at Pinewood, "—I was starkers." Evidently they had remained unlikely chums.

Neither put in an appearance until midday, having been generously—I thought—excused morning activities after their late arrival. In the younger group we had been making a raft by lashing logs together. I suppose it was an exercise in what is now called "Survival", and with my dimly-remembered Royal Engineers' expertise I had again rather taken charge. A midday snack of soup and sandwiches was brought out as usual by Land-Rover. Tynan uncoiled himself languidly from the passenger seat. He was wearing tight-fitting leopard-skin trousers and a creamy cashmere sweater.

While we fell on the food he smoked a cigarette which he held between the middle and third fingers, and explained that he and Di had had a little something back at the Lodge. She had opted to go deer-stalking with the mature contingent. He turned pale eyes on the raft.

"Wh-what's that?" he inquired.

"A raft."

"Is it supposed to f-float?"

We looked at our handiwork again. We had been rather proud of it. Suddenly it did look less impressive. Bernard Levin, who was supposed to have made sure all the logs were cut to the same length, had somehow overlooked two odd ones which jutted out; uneven tension in the lashings gave the whole structure a distinctly rhomboid shape.

"Criticise, criticise", said Derek Granger bitterly. "It looked all right until you came along."

"That's what we're em-em-em—what we're paid to do", said Tynan reasonably. It wasn't really a stammer; hardly more than a slight hesitation when certain clusters of consonants threatened; he never quite managed to address Magnus Magnusson in full.

I said haughtily, "The only test is whether it works."

"Very well", said Tynan. "Let us try. Bags I steer."

It was entirely typical of him that he alone contrived to regain the bank ten minutes later without so much as getting his hand-made Pelota boots wet, though only poor Oakes went in up to his waist. Back at the Lodge we were greeted by the sight of Miss Dors surrounded by attentive members of the older group. I'd seen her on the stage once but this was the first time I'd come face to face with that chubby lacquer-smooth face, cheerful deep-curved smile and that cascade of bright platinum hair.

"My goodness", she said as we dripped in. "What *have* you boys been up to?"

"The *Daily Mail* made a raft", said Tynan.

"Oh, chuck it", I said, but no one had ears for anyone but Di. "You should have come with us", she cooed. "We wriggled all over the place peeping at stags and things, didn't we, Philip?" Her hand lightly rested on Hope-Wallace's. "We saw one quite stupen-

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dous . . . buck!" The lips curved in ladle-like smile.

DINNER THAT EVENING was accompanied by much hilarity. The older wags vied with each other to produce the most daring epigrams. Milton Shulman held forth on the social habits of the larger primates in the London Zoo, with whom he was making a television programme. Canon C. B. Mortlock of the *Daily Telegraph* stood up to deliver an address of welcome full of graceful allusions to Diana and Endymion, and some of us younger ones threw bread-rolls at each other. If it hadn't been for the card school that developed in the library afterwards it is quite possible that Miss Dors' presence would have been counted a very positive contribution to the Adventure Course. As it was, there were some pale faces and dark-shadowed eyes at breakfast next morning. Steele's displeasure was unconcealed. He had trusted us to get to bed in decent time without a formal Lights Out, and up till now this had been the case. Moreover, the consumption of alcohol, which had been gratifyingly modest, had suddenly increased out of all proportion —no fewer than three bottles of Laphroaig had been polished off in one evening, plus a bottle of Armagnac and a magnum of champagne. What had happened?

No good looking at me, I reflected complacently. I had played Scrabble with Robert Robinson and Philip Oakes and young Alex Walker of the *Birmingham Post*, until Alex complained of the cigarette smoke. I had made one rather witty remark and decided to retire to bed while still on top. I know Bob also turned in, as, fortunately, did Canon Mortlock. I can't vouch for others. Some passed the story on as if they had only heard it at second hand. But apparently La Dors, bored by the sixpenny stakes which by common consent prevailed, had agreed to a game of Strip Poker, which had predictably ended with her starkers once more and such critics as remained in varying states of undress. All of which was very tantalising, even if one was newly married and therefore above such things. I resolved to stay up and be more gregarious next time.

Alas, matters were to come to a head before there could be a next time. That very afternoon had been set aside for a Hare and Hounds cross-country which for the first time would bring the senior and junior cadres together, the former being allowed to call it a day as soon as one of the two hares was caught, the rest of us having to carry on after the other. And the hares, Steele grimly announced, were to be Mr Tynan and Miss Dors. After all, as we had been reminded by the reverend gentleman the night before, was not Diana the goddess of the hunt? And if any classicist objected—as Hope-Wallace was already trying to do—that her sympathies would lie with the hunters rather than the hunted, well, there might be more than one reversal of roles on the cards.

What did he mean by that? Peter Forster whispered that he had overheard "Staff" and the Ghillie discussing plans. The hares had been given a route which would take them over the worst country in the neighbourhood, through prickly gorse and clogging marshes, up and down taxing gradients. The instructors would be lying in wait to harass us with thunderflashes. It was to be a punishment for last night's lapse.

Steele organised the departure. The hares were to have a ten-minute start, then we hounds would be despatched according to a handicap system based on age and build. Tynan set off with the elegant long-legged lope of a medium-pace bowler, which is what he had been at school. Over his shoulder he carried the haversack of smoke candles by which he was to blaze the trail. Diana followed him, blonde hair streaming, the seat of her flamingo pink trews jogging in such splendid undulations that a cheer broke from our throats. "She's a lovely mover", even Clive Barnes, ballet critic of the *Express*, was forced to admit.

We watched them all the way down the drive, across the road, over a low stone wall and up the hill beyond, until they were hidden by a fold in the ground. Steele looked at his watch and sent the oldest hounds off, Canon Mortlock and Charles Reid, the *News Chronicle*'s cheery music critic. Fred Majdalany, Philip Hope-Wallace and Milton Shulman followed, and so on down the list until Peter Forster and I were given the signal, with only Oakes and Magnusson and one or two others still fretting behind us. Peter was slightly younger than me, I think,

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but carrying a little extra weight.

Once over the brow of the hill we could see the field strung out raggedly ahead, and disappearing over the skyline the bright ant-like figures of the hares. A few moments later the little plume of grey from the first smoke candle streamed in the wind.

IT MUST HAVE been about the fifth candle when it was apparent the hares had strayed—deliberately?—off the prescribed route. Instead of continuing up the mountain and then heading West down towards the Loch they had swung sharply East, through a plantation of puny conifers and heading for the river. This was Out of Bounds, private land belonging to the local Duke. It would be something if we ran into trouble with His Grace's keepers. Then I saw a flimsy structure spanning the water. The famous sheep bridge! Doubly out of bounds! They weren't proposing to tackle that! But even as I stared I saw bright flamingo trousers, now in the lead, twinkling across. Leopard skins followed.

When Peter and I reached the bridge the leading hares were halted, puffing. Tall gallows-like structures on each bank supported the cables from which the narrow treadway was suspended. The wood was bleached and could be rotten; the rusty cables were fuzzy with broken strands; many of the treads were missing, others broken.

"Adventure is one thing", said Shulman. "Odds on a broken leg is something else."

"If a girl can do it, we can." Who said that? It wasn't me, I swear.

"Oh, come on", said the brave, quiet Majdalany. Looking steadfastly to the front he began to saunter across. At first he trod firmly, but as he advanced into the centre section we saw him clutch for support. Hope-Wallace went next, then Milton. I knew that if I didn't follow that moment I never would. As could be inferred from watching the others, the first bit was easy. Through the gallows tree and out on the long suspended section I closed my eyes and prayed. The walkway rippled and twisted as if a giant on the far bank were cracking it like a whip. One moment the flimsy handhold was down at knee-level, the next at arm's length above. From below came the sound of the river tumbling over waiting stones.

At last the going grew steadier. I dared look down and saw the shallows, then moss and fern. Another few paces and I was on dry land. The trail led along the bank for a quarter of a mile before veering off through a field of scrubby grass and patches of gorse to join one of the narrow Sutherland roads. Peter and I jogged along it, uncaring when Magnus Magnusson overtook. Ahead, some sort of activity became visible. There seemed to be lots of people, a number of vehicles, huddles of fencing and what looked like a marquee—*was* a marquee, for Heaven's sake—all in the middle of nowhere. Borne on the wind were the sound of voices and bleat of many sheep.

Magnus fell back, eager with information. "It's a sheep fanks", he cried excitedly. "We've come across a real sheep fanks."

"And what, pray, is that?"

"The little auction at which the crofters put up the sheep and lambs they have a mind to sell before the winter."

A trio of sheep were in fact being prodded round a tiny ring as we drew close, watched by a small encircling crowd who eyed us briefly before returning their attention to the auctioneer who stood at a roughly-carpentered desk. He seemed to be having to work hard for the few grunted bids he attracted. We watched for a few minutes, then word got around that the marquee was a refreshment tent.

AT FIRST SIGHT it wasn't very inviting, with the bare ground underfoot already trodden to slush, the light dim, the air thick with tobacco smoke. But behind a trestle table a man and two girls were briskly dispensing measures of Scotch and rum or deftly scooping bottles of Export from a stack of crates and opening them in the same movement. The buzz of voices was welcoming.

"Would you by any chance have a bottle of Moët et Chandon?" Philip Hope-Wallace asked one of the girls.

"What's that, Morag?" called the man, and the question put again, shook his head sorrowfully. "No, there is not much call for it, you see. Chuist the Oatmeal Stout."

At the heart of the conviviality, as might have been expected, was Diana. Perched on an up-ended crate, glass in hand, one flamingo-pink leg crossed over the other, hair shining

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through the gloom, she held court to an admiring circle of shepherds, drovers and tweedy young men from the ducal seat. Tynan leaned as elegantly as possible against one of the tent poles, delivering what was doubtless a glittering monologue to a smaller knot of Celts. Steam rose from the critical pullovers and trousers as the rest of us dried off in the fug. The bottles of pale malt emptied and fresh were opened. Robert Robinson discovered a source of mutton pies, gently charring over a peat stove, which proved to be delicious.

An hour, perhaps two, sped by. One of the shepherds began to sing Gaelic songs in a high tenor voice. A carrier offered "I belong to Glesca." Diana Dors gave a spirited rendering of "Ain't misbehavin' " and Philip Hope-Wallace was prevailed upon for an aria from *Lucia di Lammermoor*. Robert Robinson recited a comic monologue entitled "The Fireman's Ball." Diana sang again, "Ten Cents a Dance", which was judged very moving. The Fieldcraft and Adventure Course was quite forgotten. "Perhaps they're out searching the mountains", said Derek Granger hopefully.

It was Magnus Magnusson who characteristically sparked off what happened next, though it might not have come to anything without Tynan's much-advertised Socialism. Magnus had stayed rather on the fringe of the party, deep in conversation with the most gnarled of all the gnarled sheepfolk. From time to time he nodded his head and made notes in a little notebook—who else would have carried such an item on a hare-and-hounds chase? No doubt he was eager-beavering a story for the *Express*. He'd have trouble finding a telephone in the middle of nowhere.

But it wasn't that. "Did you know", he lobbed into a lull between jokes and songs, "that these puir fellows have hardly sold a single animal, and when they have the prices have been so low they have hardly covered the cost of coming here?" He quoted some figures from his notes.

"That's terrible", said Shulman.

"Even the *Guardian* pays better", said Hope-Wallace, shocked.

Moved by some common instinct we flocked out of the marquee and clustered round the ring. A ram occupied the stage. The auctioneer was still struggling to get any bids. The owner of the animal, an old woman in a shawl and grimy raincoat, watched anxiously.

"It's pure theatre", said Peter Forster, his eyes suddenly opened. All the drama critics were looking on hungrily, as if it were something of which they had been deprived too long. "The theatre of cruelty, though", said Shulman.

"Of injustice, you mean", said Tynan.

"What can we do?"

"Record it for the world."

"That's just wet."

"It's the critic's role."

"This is where the critic must *act*."

"But how?"

No one had an answer.

Diffidently I said, "We could try putting up the bidding."

We took it in turns and for a little while it worked like a charm. The price of three lambs went up by over a pound, a fine Cheviot ram by nearly thirty shillings. It was the luckless Bernard Levin for whom the system first went wrong. He found himself left with the final bid, and proud owner of a mangey-looking ewe.

"Never mind", cried Charles Reid. "We'll all chip in."

After that people grew careless. We ended up in joint possession of a ram, four ewes and nine lambs. Tynan, never without a chequebook, paid and we gave him IOUs for £5.1s.3d. each.

"Put it on expenses", advised Fred Majdalany, echoing our Mr Hardcastle.

THE ONLY PROBLEM now was what to do with the creatures. It was too late to put them up again: the auctioneer had rushed to the refreshment tent the moment the last lot was knocked down; all around people were packing up. Philip Oakes, I think it was, brought over the carrier who had sung "I belong to Glesca." He offered to transport the sheep wherever we wanted them to go, at a price.

We went back to the marquee for another drink and a discussion. Fred Majdalany's proposition was voted the most equitable considering who would ultimately be paying for the stock, though it would cost us another two quid in delivery charges. The ram was

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consigned to Lord Beaverbrook; the ewes to Lord Rothermere, the Hon. David Astor and L. P. Scott; braces of lambs to Lord Kemsley, Lord Camrose, L. J. Cadbury, and Cecil Harmsworth King. Diana Dors said she would keep the remaining little one. As far as we could learn the sheep were safely delivered in Manchester and Fleet Street; some say, indeed, they are still there, and now in senior management.

Stones

No, don't refer to lapidaries for these
Unacademic pebbles tides have fashioned,
Nor for those stones eroded by time's action
Beside that ditch accommodating beetles,
Worms, or ants red as blood you prick with pin-heads:
Each is its certain self—the haunt of minnows
At the brook's bed, or suppliant at stream's surface
To testing foot that takes its step for granted
In retrospect.

Look there—along the beach a distant father
Is flinging a chip of flint: it skims the water:
A skill or knack his boy is bound to envy.

Plump hills and dumpy hillocks have their special
Stones which make the paths that helter-skelter
Upwards towards the bald or sprouting summits.
No pumice looks the same at the bath's bottom,
No tor, no drumlin casts an identical shadow.

Yes, you may learn a bit from strings that beckon
Swinging around girls' necks, bumping their bosoms,
But more from these: the stones of this knowing country.

Through the forgotten acres head cross-country
Along the veins that lead back to the centre
(No, not "arterial" roads which zip together
Parish and suburb, with restricted sidings)
—These veins threading through stones in curious colours
And ancient farmlands, paths that cars are blind to,
May bring the self back home from its lonely outpost
To the heart's centre—there spirit prepares its journey.

Edward Levy

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Raymond Aron

My Defence of Our Decadent Europe (II)

7. *The Common Programme of the Left*

IN SPITE OF George Marchais' many efforts to convince people of the deep-seated similarities between the Italian and French Communist parties—in order to borrow from the Italian reputation for "liberalism" which the French one certainly does not enjoy—there remain none the less more differences than similarities.

Certainly both parties are affected by international influences. The writings of Solzhenitsyn have made it impossible to be oblivious to certain aspects of the Stalinist past. Distinguished Soviet dissidents now leave for the West instead of vanishing into camps, and so it has become impossible to deny certain aspects of present-day life in the Soviet Union. It has become rather difficult, too, to call a total monopoly of speech and publication, like that enjoyed by the Bolshevik party, a new non-capitalist form of freedom of the press. In seeking votes, both parties have to condemn the "negative aspects" or the "errors" of the Soviet system, while repeating, of course, their opposition to any form of anti-Sovietism.

The differences concern, first of all, the structure and style of the two parties. The French Communist party has never again found the number of supporters which it proudly boasted just after the last War. Today it has about half a million, and it still serves only as a temporary stopping-place for many of its more militant members. There is a permanent, almost unassailable hard core of adherents, and some of them are remarkably faithful (in many families Communism is handed down from father to son). But most leave the Party after a few years and give place to others.

Even more important than the differences between the two Parties is the difference between their internal alliances. In France, at the presidential election of 1969, the Socialist party had fallen to its lowest point. The candidate it put up, without mobilising its forces, came in far behind Jacques Duclos and Alain Poher; and observers no longer regarded him as a serious rival. Seven years later, the Socialist party, according to the public opinion polls and the results of by-elections, was set to become the leading party in France. François Mitterand was in 1974 only a few hundred thousand votes from the Elysée Palace. He believes—and so do most analysts—in a victory for a Socialist-Communist coalition in the legislative elections of 1978. In this respect, France has evolved in a way exactly contrary to that of Italy. In the first post-War elections, the Communist party in France was more successful than the Socialist party; in Italy, the Socialists did better than the Communists. Thirty years later, the Socialist party in Italy had fallen below 10%, while the Communist party had risen to over 34%. In France, the Socialist party was to exceed 25% and reach 30%, whereas the Communist party had fallen to around 20% with a maximum of 25%.

We must not forget, however, that this quite recent rise in support for the Socialist party is, first of all, exclusively or nearly so an *electoral* success (for the moment still a potential one). Outside the unions of government employees (particularly the teachers) the Socialist party has only a limited influence on them, although it has tried to get into the industrial unions. Moreover, it has a "left wing", a kind of third party which is influential at the Party Congress, is close to the Communist party, and would probably not follow a Mitterand majority if the Communists decided to break up the *Union de la Gauche*.

RAYMOND ARON *concludes in this issue his assessment of "the two Europes", based on his "Plaidoyer pour l'Europe décadente" (just published by Laffont). The first section of his article appeared in the September issue, with an introduction—"Raymond Aron's 'Vindication' "—by* LEOPOLD LABEDZ.

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A Time of Troubles

HOW WOULD the Communist party behave in the case of a government led by François Mitterand? How far would he be able to administer the country while carrying out the reforms set down in the Common Programme? How would cooperation be achieved between a President of the Republic elected by a particular majority, and a Prime Minister representing another? It seems to me impossible to give a definite answer to any of these questions. A crisis is, by definition, brought about by a series of interconnected events, some directly provoked by a human decision, others the result of unforeseen consequences, or the interplay, deliberate or not, of incompatible impulses. I shall not try to predict what will happen, but I should like first to formulate, then to give grounds for, a thesis. A government run by François Mitterand, under the Presidency of Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, will inevitably fail. One president will drive out the other. If François Mitterand manages to drive out the President of the Republic, his term of office will last longer and cost more. It will bring about certain irreversible changes and, at the same time, confirm the gloomy predictions of those who (like Tocqueville), consider that the downfall of liberal democracy leads to a despotic régime, which in the most favourable circumstances may be benevolent.

THE JOINT PROGRAMME of the Socialists and Communists is, characteristically, an attempt to find a form of socialism that lies somewhere between Social Democracy and Marxism. The social-democratic governments that have had lasting success have all subordinated the "nationalisation of the means of production" to the more important question of efficiency. In other words, knowing that the masses expect a socialist government to *improve* their conditions, they have realised that the first priority is to keep the means of production in good working order. In an underdeveloped country, the nationalisation of the often small industrial sector may be justified. In France, in its present state of development, the nationalisation envisaged in the *Programme Commun* goes far beyond the amount that is tolerable in a country which wishes to remain within the European community, and is itself an integral part of the Atlantic alliance.

To use a formula dear to Marxists, after a certain point quantity turns into quality. The nationalisation of Renault did not prevent—in a sense it favoured—the expansion of the French car industry. Those in charge at Renault, who had no need to remunerate their former shareholders, concentrated upon expansion as much as they could. Those at Peugeot were more prudent; those at Citroën made unforgivable mistakes. Whether it is desirable or not, the nationalisation of a single firm in a particular sector that remains competitive does not compromise the set-up as such. Nationalisation of gas and electricity had technical and economic advantages at the start; but the state-run sector tends to over-invest, thus risking a reduction in the amount of capital available for the private sector.

The Common Programme envisages, first, the nationalisation of the entire system of banking and credit, then that of nine big industrial groups, and finally threatens to nationalise any and every business, whatever it may be.

It is not, therefore, social-democratic, though it explicitly rejects a Soviet type of plan. It seeks to be socialist, then, halfway between the two extreme interpretations of Marxism-Leninism and the Marxist Vulgate. Unfortunately, this middle course condemns itself in advance by its internal contradictions, its basic absurdity. In fact, François Mitterand has, without even realising it, allowed the slogans of the Communist party and the Marxist-Leninist view of the world to appear as established fact. Given this, the Programme takes on a kind of rational appearance, but one that immediately suggests a state of crisis. With utter ingenuousness, it promises to exert strict control over foreign exchange, breaking with the very essence of the present régime: its open frontiers. In theory, the control of exchange does not mean that the freedom of exchange of goods will not be safeguarded; but in practice this freedom and this control will always go uneasily together. Freedom will turn control into a sieve, and control will soon be extended to the goods themselves.

Those who drafted the Programme support the formulas of the Marxist Vulgate, which are tinged here and there with Leninism. Starting from this false analysis, they wish to give to the state the power which they believe has been usurped by "the monopolies." But, in the strict sense of the term, there are no monopolies in France except those set up by the state—the monopoly for the production and distribution of electricity and gas, and the monopoly of the railways (road transport still curtails this). To call Rhône-Poulenc or the CGE a monopoly is to take unfair advantage of popular credulity. So long as the frontiers remain open, competition between the various chemical groups, which are all more or less transnational, remains lively but is expensive. On the day the Communists and Socialists feel compelled to close the frontiers, Rhône-Poulenc may acquire an almost monopolistic position in France.

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What the Socialists have not understood is that in supporting the Marxist-Leninist interpretation of "monopoly capitalism" they will force themselves to follow their allies along a road not of reform but of upheaval. The nationalisation of a sector that includes an entire financial system (insurance, banks, credit) ensures that the state has direct control over all savings, those of individuals and those of organisations. Anyone who knows the attitude of Frenchmen towards money, taxation and public bodies cannot fail to foresee their reaction. The same Frenchmen who, through their votes, have shown apparent confidence in the left coalition will, the very next day, show their defiance of a state which seeks a monopoly of the management of private savings and of capital, large or small.

Two Conflicting Powers

ONE CAN IMAGINE, if need be, that after some years the state might possibly give each industrial group and each credit organisation an autonomous management that would be much like that of private enterprise. But there can be no doubt that the move to Mitterand-type socialism implies unsettled conditions for several years, and possibly worse. It is no use the government announcing that nationalisation "will take place in a gradual, flexible way" through "an industrial strategy adapted to the needs of economic and social progress and to the international character of economic life." Who is going to invest in groups scheduled to become public property? Who is going to invest in enterprises where "the workers are involved at all levels", where "the workers' involvement in the management and direction of business will take new forms"—forms which the French Socialist party has included in its plan for "*autogestion*" and the French Communist party in "the permanent development of democratic management, determined by agreement between the democratic power, those in charge of the enterprise concerned, and the trade unions"? A splendid text! "Democratic management" (according to the Communists, and as it has been demonstrated in Eastern Europe) means a strengthening of the authority of the managers; whereas self-management, the kind the socialists aim at, involves a limitation of that authority through work committees and the trade unions, and finally the election of managers by the workers. The joint Programme calls both these —wholly antagonistic—formulas "democratic." They do, in fact, have one thing in common: they give the employees of firms, directly or through their trade unions or other organisations, the right to question the authority of those in charge. If one imagines the social climate immediately after a left-wing victory, it is impossible to doubt the practical result of these incompatible formulas, which some of those drafting the text probably thought quite harmless.

Today, even in the cultured *milieux* I know (among academics, for instance), most people anticipate that a victory for the Socialist and Communist alliance will bring improved conditions, and an increase in their purchasing power. But the alliance will bring nothing of the sort. Even if, optimistic and unlikely as that prospect seems, inflation slows down and expansion speeds up in 1978, the rise in prices, encouraged by a wage-rise higher than that in the cost of living, will make restrictive measures inevitable and, in any case, leave the underprivileged and the working masses little of the promised higher standard of living. To think that the masses will follow the Party line and believe that a change in the system of ownership warrants "sacrifices" is to forget all the lessons of the past, whether French or foreign—from France in 1936 to Portugal in 1974.

The battle of the two powers (the *Assemblée* and the *Elysée*), the upheavals in the economy brought about by the rise of a socialism more Soviet than social-democratic, and popular demands: all guarantee a near-revolutionary crisis. One possible outcome is the return of a conservative majority; another, more dramatic, outcome is also conceivable. Even the best would cost us dear.

WHY, THEN, IN 1977, does an opposition divided between Communists and Socialists, which proposes and promises a quasi-revolution, seem poised for victory when the great majority of Frenchmen have no wish for the time of troubles they are going to let loose through their votes? There are explanations for this, and they may be not so much contradictory as complementary.

The same men and the same parties have been governing France for almost 20 years. Men of the centre (followers of Duhamel, and then of Lecanuet and Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber) went over to the majority from the opposition, but without taking with them most of those who had voted for them. All democratic régimes, subject to elections at regular intervals, which do not bring about a change in the team in power from time to time become vulnerable—unless the ruling party is quite clearly dominant. The UDR has not shown itself to be a dominant party; even General de Gaulle's Presidential majority in 1965 failed to show it at the first ballot, and the same is

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true of the majorities of Georges Pompidou in 1969 and of Valéry Giscard d'Estaing in 1974. *L'Unité de la Gauche*—that hoary myth of French politics—tends to reject all others on its right. Once an alliance between Communists, Socialists and left-wing radicals has been formed, the Presidential majority finds itself automatically confused with *la droite*, in spite of efforts by some Gaullists to set themselves on the left of the Presidential majority.

Since French politics are now defined once again by a duel between the Right and the Left, why should the Left not have its chance one day? In 1974, François Mitterand collected ten times as many signatures from distinguished men—artists, writers, scholars, academics—as did Valéry Giscard d'Estaing. Such people, of course, no longer give their hearts *au petit père des peuples*, the late Joseph Stalin; but they do not reject the idea of this Party, which, on its own admission has never ceased to lie and betray, participating in the government. What they want is a brand of socialism somewhere between the Soviet model and Social Democracy, a brand that exists nowhere at all and has always failed, both here and abroad, when efforts have been made to promote it.

THE PARTY IN POWER bears a certain responsibility for its own possible defeat. Above all, it has not given the other parties a large enough place in the Republic. It could easily have gained the agreement of certain left-wing Radicals by not endangering their seats in the National Assembly. In constituencies where they could get into the second round only with the support of the Communists, a majority candidate drives them into the alliance. In a more general way the two-tier majority poll (for the Presidency and for the legislature) leaves the Socialists no choice except hopeless opposition or *l'Union de la Gauche*. The spokesmen of the present majority are in no position to reproach them for so allying themselves.

The constitution of 1958 (revised in 1962 so that the election of the President of the Republic is by universal suffrage) gives today's majority many advantages. Once the President is elected, how can he be refused a parliamentary majority which is ready to collaborate with him? But once this majority has been established in the *Assemblée nationale*, then there would be a crisis if the new President of the Republic had to dissolve the Assembly as soon as he had been elected. Each time, the régime is blackmailing the voters with a crisis; and one day or other Frenchmen will take a stand against this.

Will they also rise up against bad or unjust managment? *Bad* management? If the norm is taken to be not what one might wish for but what in fact is likely, then certainly not. The modernisation of the French economy, begun by the Fourth Republic, was continued and speeded up under the Fifth. Without accepting everything that the Hudson Institute had to say in its rosy, much-publicised report, or attaching too much importance to the rate of growth of the French gross national product (which, in the years before the recession, was faster than that of West Germany), it cannot be doubted that France has changed more in the quarter-century from 1948–73 than in the whole of the previous century. It seemed moot whether France could recover from the retardation of the period between the two world wars; but the fact remains that she did. Would she have done as well under another government? This is questionable. The Fourth Republic, which had its unappreciated good points, has been harshly treated by historians because it showed up the country in a ridiculous light, made it seem like a caricature. During its final years, Frenchmen felt a certain shame in their political establishment and turned away from its centre. But since 1958, they have felt themselves part of their Republic (even if they have wished for certain rearrangements).

The leaders have made their share of mistakes, of course. All governments have an industrial policy, and costly economic decisions are taken by ministers without any special skill in such matters. It cannot be said that decisions taken over aviation have been justified by events. There has been a great deal of building, but in most cases it has been neither attractive nor well-organised. The vast conurbations and "new towns" symbolise the most unpleasant aspects of modern town-planning. Social purposes have often been deflected, and the poorest still fail to find shelter.

For all that, is French society any more "unjust" than another? Any more unequal? Is tax evasion any more widespread? The French tax system favours farmers and small businesses by the *forfait* system (in the absence of exact accounts); it spares inheritances because there is no capital tax, and the maximum rate of death duty is 20%. In many ways, then, it can be said that this tax system is not "modern", but only if the Anglo-Saxon countries, including the Netherlands and Scandinavia, are taken as a model of modern taxation.

The *forfait* arrangements probably allow many small enterprises, commercial or industrial, to survive. Fraud is probably practised by many small builders (where the customer's interest and the builder's coincide). How far do legislators and governments wish to go in dealing with such

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"semi-personal" activities? Do they, whether they belong to the Left or the Right, really want to treat small firms as they do the big corporations? This "traditional" sector forms a sort of social cushion that softens the shock of possible changes and variations (the hypermarkets and supermarkets, for instance, would have caused even more of an upheaval if small firms had not survived on account of this privileged tax position).

La fraude fiscale, concentrated in the social groups in which revenue is not declared by third parties and is made up of a mixture of salary and profit, exists in every country. Getting rid of such tax frauds in France presupposes public support and enough inspectors; and other kinds of fraud, apparently quite legal (for instance, the concealment of profits by giving salaries to several members of the family in limited liability companies), would need reforms which no National Assembly would happily vote for.

GISCARD D'ESTAING'S EFFORTS in the field of taxing capital gains and "increased values" culminated in a futile proposal, so large was the number of exceptions to what could be taxed. But the very idea of such taxation in a period of inflation led the socialist Alfred Sauvy to write: "There is something humorous about putting a tax on increases in value at the very time when decreases in value are widespread, and to say that there is no tax on capital in France is a play on the words *tax* and *capital*...." That is to say, if those who had to pay the tax for "increases in value" had been able to deduct for all the decreases in value, the state would have had to pay out. Altogether such measures seem to me to add to injustice rather than correct it. No doubt some new forms of taxation on development land or on speculative real estate are called for, and it is easy to gain sympathy for the idea by taking examples of that kind. But when the state organises vast social injustice through inflation and makes the system work by a tax on inactive capital, then the claim to "re-establish justice by taxation" is, in the final analysis, contemptible.

As to inequality of income in France (a subject on which statistics are quite unreliable), it is certainly greater than in the Social Democratic countries (Sweden or Norway), but perhaps not much greater than in Great Britain. It is not substantial enough to explain the paradox which Alfred Sauvy sums up better than anyone in two propositions Alfred Sauvy, *L'économie du diable* (1976), p. 69:

> In one generation, the standard of living has more than doubled, giving rise to an amazing contradiction:
> (*a*) progress is faster than it has ever been in history and it is unlikely that it will ever be so again;
> (*b*) discontent is greater than ever before, in nearly every level of society. This discontent has increased, encouraged by professional groups whose function it is to behave thus, and even more by information from the mass media, hoping to flatter and persuade the public.

ALL THE NEW **tax panaceas (on increases in value, the changing of the rate of death and inheritance duties, on capital)—none of these, it seems will decrease discontent. Must we conclude that the liberal democracies can survive only by modelling themselves on the Swedish social democracy? It is growth itself, such as we have seen for the past quarter-century, which brings with it, not (as I and many others have believed) a "querulous satisfaction", but a "demanding discontent", and it is this which inspires yet again a search for "equality" and a "sense of community", those old, unachievable ideals of socialism.**

8. *The Case of Declining Britain*

THE MOMENT HE SETS FOOT **on British soil, the traveller from the continent feels he has found a peak of civilisation—a society in which men and women have learned to respect one another, to tolerate one another's ideas and to live together without violence and without too much envy or resentment.**

This may be true or false, and it may be fed by memories and gratitude. But can it conceal the strict accuracy of facts and figures? To be sure, the cultural or moral greatness of a nation is not measured by the size of its gross national product. Germany reached a height never attained by the Hohenzollern

Empire when it was divided into kingdoms and principalities, when it was the land of Goethe and Weimar. French literature shone more brightly between the Wars, a period of decline, than it has done during France's economic resurgence. On the other hand, Athens and Florence both had their golden age when they were at their most powerful.

Today, London probably has the most inventive and creative theatre. To judge only by the number of Nobel prizes won, Britain still makes a substantial contribution to science and

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learning; a part very much larger than seems warranted by the size of its population (taken not as a proportion of the world's, which would be meaningless, but as a proportion of that of Europe and America). Oxford and Cambridge, with their inherited traditions, have incomparable things to offer, even to visitors. But unless there is economic recovery, how long can these British virtues continue without diminution?

Anyone seeking figures to illustrate the decline of Great Britain has only too many to choose from. In 1955, its share of manufactured products in the world market rose to 22.9%; those of the Federal German Republic to 19.2%. In 1975 the figures were, respectively, 7.5 and 22.4. In that same year the gross product per capita (at current prices and exchange rates) rose to $5,060 for France, but to only $3,370 for the United Kingdom. Exports from the Federal German Republic rose to $89,106m. (that is, 23.1% of the GDP), those from France to $45,896m. (or 16.7%), and those of the United Kingdom to $38,703m. (or 20.3%).

Let us leave aside the annoying (because unresolvable) discussion on the "quality of life." What is not open to doubt is that slow growth has not protected Great Britain from dissensions and troubles any more than fast growth has protected Italy and France. What is more—and this makes the British case particularly interesting—*the British trade unions are more like those of* Scandinavia and the Netherlands than those of France and Italy. Some Communists and Trotskyists have infiltrated into key positions in important unions, but the introduction of procedures which would reflect the wishes of the majority and thus reduce the influence of militants may be the long-term reply to this danger.

What does it consist of—this sickness which we have come to call *"le mal anglais"*? How can it be explained? Superficially, it manifests itself in alternating short phases of expansion, which bring about a rise in prices and in the trade deficit, immediately followed by contraction, brought about by the government itself in an effort to re-establish the balance of trade. This stop-go mechanism seems to typify the sickness from which the British economy is suffering. It threatens all western democracies, we are told, from the moment the trade unions exercise such power that they can extract wage increases beyond the increase in productivity.

This rather banal economic interpretation can easily be given more weight by an equally unoriginal social explanation. Essentially, the action of the trade unions reflects the feelings, habits, qualities and faults of organisations formed in the last century and ill-suited to the present one. The many small and overlapping trade unions tend to multiply the number of individual conflicts. Their leaders wish neither to manage the firms they work in nor to suppress the private ownership of the means of production (although they are on the ideological record for "public property"). The socialism of the British trade unions goes back to the Fabian tradition with its emphasis on redistribution rather than on production.

"Le Mal Anglais"

DURING THE FIRST PHASE after the War the slowness of Britain's growth—compared with that of the Federal German Republic, France, and Italy—was undeniably established. Various reasons, all of them plausible, were put forward to explain it. The Establishment, it was said, under the influence of the City, was sacrificing industry to money. In order to reassure depositors of world funds in London, they braked sooner and harder than was necessary.

The unions, it was also said, resisted not only "continental ideologies", but also the changes which were needed for modern organisation and productivity. With the same machines as the Americans, British factories sometimes employed twice as many workmen. During the miners' strike, when there was a three-day week, industry managed to produce almost as much as it had done in the five-day week. Didn't this suggest that, with the same equipment, it would be quite possible to produce more if ever the social climate improved and a strong wish for efficiency animated a working class (and a managerial corps) which was still clinging to outworn traditional ways of doing things?

The divergence—between the rate of growth of the gross national product or the rate of growth of industrial productivity in Great Britain on the one hand, in Italy, France and Germany on the other—was not yet enough to persuade many observers of the seriousness of the disease. In fact, for over a century the rate of growth in Britain had never been anything but lower than that of Germany and the USA. And during the post-War years until the beginning of the 1960s this British rate of growth became faster than the rate which had been calculated for it over a long period. In other words, the United Kingdom was progressing a little faster than it had done in the past, but France and Italy were moving very much faster.

But even then reassuring explanations were given. France and Italy were starting from a much lower level; they had a reserve of manual labour in agriculture, and the transfer of this to industry and other fields necessarily involved an increase

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in the GNP. This transfer implied in fact that the workers were moving from an occupation of low productivity to one of higher productivity. Besides, the percentage of the national product invested remained at about 15–17% in the United Kingdom—very much below the German, which since the 1950s had been at around 20–25%, a percentage towards which France was reaching during the 1960s. In 1975, the gross amount of fixed capital at current prices was 25.1% of the GDP in France and 20.1% in the U.K. The social tensions brought about by the French and Italian "miracles" suggested at least that a high rate of growth was not in itself a good thing, or a supreme criterion. A lower percentage of investment, therefore a more moderate rate of growth, might well be taken as a sign of wisdom, not of indolence.

These justifications or excuses could no longer hold up after the catastrophic results of the years 1961–75 (or 1965–75). The average rate of inflation from 1955 to 1965 was 3.1%; it doubled during the period 1965–75 (7%), and rose to 26% in 1974–75. At the same time the average rate of absenteeism rose from 1.9% to 2.7% and then to 5% in 1975. From 1955 to 1965, the pound kept its value in relation to the main industrial countries; from 1965 to 1974, it lost 38% of its value. The number of days lost as a result of social conflicts was multiplied by 2.1%. How wages and prices went is shown in the following figures. The rise in retail prices, during the twelve previous months, had been 9% in December 1971, 7.7% in December 1972, 10% in December 1973, 19.2% in December 1974, and 24.9% in December 1975. The rises in wages during the twelve months preceding the same dates were respectively 9% (1971), 14% (1972), 14.7% (1973), 26.7% (1974) and 20.7% (1975). These figures do not allow one to decide which—wages or prices—gave the push to inflation. (Certainly redistributive taxation was a further reason to make wage-earners demand pay rises higher than the rise in prices, in order to keep the same purchasing power after tax.)

In short, during the past ten-to-fifteen years, the "English sickness" has taken on a new character. The reasons are no longer only the familiar ones: the tendency to use *stop-go* policies because of dependence on the prices of imported products; trade-union power; priority given to the defence of the pound; the low percentage of investments, *etc.* Although the diagnoses differ considerably, certain facts seem to emerge from unarguable data. Throughout the period 1963–74, real wages went up by only 1.9%, not only because the rise in the cost of living reduced the increase in nominal wages to almost nothing but also because of higher deductions for tax and social security. In 1963, the average worker earned £18 and took home £15.05. In 1974 he took home £17.9 out of the total of £47.7 which in theory he earned: taxes and social security took £13, the rise in the cost of living £16.8.

A Lesson for the West?

ROBERT BACON and Walter Eltis have put forward a thesis* that deserves consideration in all the Western countries. The percentage of non-industrial employment has increased by a third in comparison with that employed in industry. The transfer to non-industrial work (33.9%) has taken place with a speed that has no equivalent elsewhere (in France it has been only 18.6%, in Germany 14.2%). Employment in central government has increased by 9.4%, in local government by 53.7%, in teaching by 76.4%, in leisure and entertainment by 19%. These transfers, which are in line with the normal evolution of Western societies, have been too rapid (thus reducing the number of people available for the industrial sector) and also ill-conceived. The cost of administration increased more than the quality of the social services.

The production of the industrial sector was used in five ways: in consumption outside industry; in net investment outside industry; in consumption by industrial workers; in net investment in industry; and in net exports. The enlarging of the non-industrial sector meant that the first two on this list increased, and industrial workers tried in vain to retain their share. Finally, those most affected were the last two on the list (net industrial investment and net exports) which fell respectively between 1961 and 1974 from 8.2% to 6.3% (as a percentage of total industrial production) and from 15.4% to 6.6%. All these figures show a small growth in productive capacity and a deficit in the balance of payments.

It is clear that the tendency to inflation and the technique of *stop-go* are not so much the result of bad management as of the structure of the British economy, the distribution of the workforce, and of the productive apparatus in the various sectors. So long as, for one reason or another, the industrial sector cannot find the means for expansion (and therefore productive investment) even an increase in productivity, which was faster between 1965 and 1974 (4%) than it was between 1955 and 1965 (3%), does not

* Robert Bacon and Walter Eltis, *Britain's Economic Problem: Too Few Producers* (London, 1976).

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solve the problem. If workers freed by an increase in productivity cannot be employed in new factories, either they will stay where they are (which is merely hidden absenteeism), or they will be on the unemployment dole, or in the end they will find work in non-industrial sectors, particularly in those which do not produce goods for the market; and thus they will make the structural defects of the British economy even worse than they are.

THIS ANALYSIS, which tells at least a good part of the truth, illustrates one of the dangers that beset the liberal democracies of the West. Economic growth tends to multiply the number of non-manual workers. The general rise in the standard of education tends to multiply even more quickly the number of those seeking non-manual work. In theory, in a perfect market, these extra seekers of non-manual work should not be given it. In practice, the demand for such work does not fail to influence its availability. Besides, local government in Great Britain (not unlike New York and other American cities) exhibits the vicious circle produced when "social democracy" is wrongly understood. In New York, the budget has made it necessary to raise higher and higher taxes, and companies react to this by leaving. In Britain, it is not a matter of firms going elsewhere but of the high taxes resulting from state expenses, from the nationalisation of bankrupt enterprises, *etc.* In the final analysis the State can finance its own spending only through the sectors which sell on the market and make profits. If these sectors do not keep enough of their surplus to prime the pump, so that part of the profits increases the capacity to create a surplus, then the whole economy can only go downhill.

Social democracy in Sweden has so far escaped the "English disease" and the New York troubles. Those in charge of government have not forgotten that the financing of social services and the redistribution of incomes demand a highly productive industry and the maintenance of a high level of investment, above all in the industrial sector. The economic catastrophe of the United Kingdom, whatever may be the precise formulas for explaining it, seems to me to carry a lesson and a warning for the whole of the West.

NO COUNTRY CAN WITHDRAW from competition without doing itself injury. No obstacles should be put in the way of the priorities and demands of the productive sector in the broad sense, of the men who work in order to sell, who produce surpluses and as a result finance state spending and failing firms. If the state or the unions remove from firms the financial means to invest, or the incentives to do so, then they throttle back the engine as it runs and have to take on the burden of investments, growth, and the sharing out of the labour force. The contradiction which threatens to paralyse the British economy has nothing in common with that foreseen by Marx. Its origin lies in an excess of taxation and the payment of social benefits, and in the cutting off of the market economy by the administrative apparatus of the state and the local authorities.

Western societies with a mixed economy have a double threat hanging over them. As the general level of education rises, the demand for non-manual employment grows faster than can be satisfied. If France did not have some three million foreign workers, this disparity would be even greater but the market might get better results: payment for manual work would increase, and this would tend to push up the desirability of such work. All Western societies tend to become societies of social services and social transfers. The criticism of industry, of pollution, of environment, of carelessness—all the fashionable ideologies of protest since the 1950s have strengthened the movement which attempts to correct some of the ills of our socio-economic system.

But—and herein lies the lesson of the British disaster—it is *still* necessary for the productive sector, in the old sense of the term (that is, the one which provides a surplus and work for the open market), to remain sufficiently extended and to retain enough of its own surplus to invest, and therefore to increase its capacity to create a surplus. When too much is taken in taxes and for the social services, there is the risk of wage claims which in turn will tend to deprive industry of the financial means of investment. Besides which, the bureaucratic organisation—and here the example of New York is just as instructive as that of Britain—not infrequently increases the cost rather than the efficiency of the social services. The unions of municipal workers, through their power and the role they play at election-time, are assured of privileges (sliding-scale, indexed pensions long before the normal age of retirement, *etc.*) which are incomparably better than anything the less privileged social groups are able to obtain. Once again, two social democracies have succeeded in avoiding this so far: Sweden, which jealously protects the prosperity of its large exporting groups, and the Federal German Republic which has the highest percentage of industrial employment in Western Europe (47.6% of all civilian employment). The French percentage is more than eight points lower than this.

Our notion of the "industrial sector" should not, of course, be confounded with that of the

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material production sector: an industry that exists only because of subsidies (like that which makes *Concorde*) is not productive, and sucks in resources from the rest of the economy. The more the state takes over firms which simply cannot balance their books, the more the nationalised enterprises fail to make profits or to pay taxes, the slower do social benefits rise, the higher do taxes go, the greater becomes the danger of wage claims, which are a source of inflation, and the more likely becomes a lack of the capital necessary for investment.

The City has kept its productive capacity, in the sense in which I have used the term: banks and insurance play the part of an exporting industry. The production of services, of invisible goods, comes from industry in the broad sense. It is necessary, therefore, for the economy as a whole to provide the frame essential for this international supply of services. At the end of 1975, London was still the banking centre of the world (with almost half of all European deposits, and about a third of all world deposits). Last summer (3 July 1976) *The Economist* entitled one of its articles "Bye-Bye Banks." It did not report that foreign banks were leaving but it foresaw that they would, worried by both the fall in sterling and by certain projected Parliamentary measures.

> . . . the behaviour of sterling, and the effect that it is having on bank balance sheets, highlights an old problem: namely, the ability of a weak industrial nation to support such a large international financial sector. People have argued the pros and cons for years. Now the marketplace is deciding. So far, this year, against.

Virtues & Their Parodies

SO FAR I HAVE CONFINED MYSELF to economic performance, the behaviour of the parties, trade-union power. A glance at the destinies of Italy, France, and Britain shows that only one—and I am the first to feel deeply sad about it—cannot escape history's verdict of decadence: once-great Britain.

During the last War, trade unionists as well as workers showed unfaltering patriotism. But no social agreement emerged from this national harmony. Everything seemed to show that the old ruling class had lost all or most of its capacity to lead.

Plausible reasons for all this suggest themselves. The centre of an Empire on which the sun never set, Great Britain has, after its victories in the War, in the last 25 years been reduced to a second-rank nation closely linked to its trans-atlantic colony, which has since become a Superpower. In Dean Acheson's cruel epigram, it has lost an empire without finding a role. When it made up its mind at last to enter the Community, "Europe" no longer had much dynamism or ideological attraction. The ideal of a United Europe tended to be identified with bureaucracy in Brussels.

It might be thought—although it cannot be demonstrated—that the monarchy and the aristocracy, traditional yet open to talent, enjoyed a very different sort of position in the days when Queen Victoria had herself made Empress of India from that which it had on the day in 1948 when the British political genius shone out once again, but graceful in retreat rather than insolent in its pride. (Is it North Sea oil, or lack of the old Empire outlets, that has aroused Scottish nationalism?)

I hesitate to interpret these matters historically. One can, of course, describe or define the crisis in Britain by using the special vocabulary of Arnold Toynbee. The ruling minority, in which old families mingle with the newly successful, no longer arouses the same respect or obtains the same obedience. Is this through a lack of outward greatness? Workers had a hard life in the United Kingdom a century ago, when the Royal Navy ruled the waves and the City of London world markets, when British industry supplied the continents with textiles, machines and goods of all kinds. The last half-century shows a two-sided picture: the disbanding of a huge, vulnerable maritime empire, but also the rise of the popular masses, including the working class, to decent living conditions. Clearly, the so-called "consumer society" has influenced the behaviour of the trade unions at least as much as "the loss of India."

Great Britain has kept many of its traditions: a "semi-sacred" monarchy (not entirely bourgeoisified, as in Sweden), personal relations that are still clearly influenced by a sense of hierarchy; élitist educational practices leading to privileged universities—all this, and the movement of ideas and events, has been pulling British society (as well as Continental societies) towards an egalitarianism scarcely compatible with traditional culture. As for the ruling class, which even before the Second World War had shown that it preferred the amenities of life to the struggles of the market place or the opening up of new frontiers, it seems almost to have given up the fight. It tries to safeguard the quality of its own life (although given its aristocratic ethos, it probably cares more for the quality of others' lives than the ruling classes do on the Continent); and it asks very few searching questions about the reasons for the relative decline of Britain in comparison with the Federal German Republic and France. It discusses dispassionately reforms that could give

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parliamentary democracy the capacity for action once again; and it waits for the manna that will not fall from Heaven but will rise from the depths of the North Sea.

What merits or even virtues have we ascribed to Britain in the past quarter-century? Its governments have rested on workable majorities in the House of Commons (though these may not represent an absolute majority of the voters, merely a relative one). If the Cabinet governs much more than Parliament does, still it is in the House of Commons that politicians learn and try out their paces; it is there that opposition is expressed, including dissension within the majority party. The Shadow Cabinet, sitting on the front bench opposite the Cabinet, serves to safeguard the quality of debate; the main speakers sound almost as if they had ministerial power themselves, and this usually saves them from demagogy. But do any of these advantages in fact still exist? The parliamentary ritual survives, sliding towards parody because power is no longer to be found in the House of Commons.

Does the government rest on a "workable majority" in Parliament or in the country? The first-past-the-post majority poll produces a homogeneous government that represents no more than a third of the electors. And the Labour government, which represents a minority in the country, is itself divided into a left wing and a right wing, the latter a minority in the parliamentary group but able to exercise a kind of veto over Cabinet decisions. Maintaining party unity becomes the leader's supreme duty; he is, indeed, chosen for his ability to achieve this unity. The ministers find themselves wedged between the Civil Service and the unions. The Civil Service advises, and tries to translate measures into action. The unions wave their weapon—the strike—in order to be able to dissuade the government, and thus to keep their own authority over their followers. When the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Denis Healey, presented a Budget in which certain tax arrangements were dependent on a prior agreement with union leaders, the sovereignty of the Commons seemed symbolically limited by another—also legitimate—sovereignty, that of the trade unions.

THE WORLD RECESSION, **in Italy and France as in the United Kingdom, may seem to be the direct, immediate cause of the political and moral crisis. But the conflict which the events of May 1968 expressed is still alive in France and Italy—whereas in Britain it has never been violent or threatened to slide into anarchy. For in the two Latin countries what forms the heart of the national problem, in the short term and in the long, is the integration of the working masses and the parties that represent them in the national community.**

9. *Tocqueville's Law*

PERHAPS THE CLASSIC SOVIET CONJUNCTION—**of political and intellectual despotism hand in hand with scientific and economic inefficiency—provides a partial explanation of one paradox of our time. By what aberration or ignorance of history do so many of our intellectuals denounce as "repressive" societies that legalise abortion, allow homosexuals to live openly together, envisage the possibility of trade unionism in the armed forces, have largely abolished the death penalty and allow everyone freedom of speech, no matter whether they champion pornography, the Baader-Meinhof gang, or any** other conceivable eccentricity? Unless all the signs are deceptive, liberal Europe is more threatened by licence than by illiberalism. Or is this licence merely superficial, a sham? If the Western system of production testifies to its productivity, does it also imply permanent constraint, hence repression?

The conjunction of proclaimed licence (which in certain fields is quite real and by no means a sham) and of denounced repression is due primarily and above all to what I shall call Tocqueville's Law—and it can be stated in many different ways. It is when régimes have weakened themselves by reforms that they are overthrown by revolution. Despotisms become vulnerable when they "liberalise" themselves. The last remaining privileges rouse the more indignation because of all the others that have been abolished. While the victims of a system tolerate a fate they believe themselves unable to alter, those who can see the summit without being able to reach it are brought to the point of revolt.

These different formulations are by no means equivalent. One applies to peasants who had secured ownership of their land and found feudal privileges all the more intolerable for the fact that they were on the way out. Another applies to a bourgeoisie impatient to reach equality of status with the nobility and obtain access to all offices. Another applies to the *ancien régime* as a whole, whose principles of legitimacy (in Montesquieu's sense) were being undermined by the movement of ideas and whose privileged class wished to reform it without foreseeing, let alone fearing, the collapse of the whole edifice.

Let me apply these by now commonplace

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classic propositions. In the matter of morals no one will deny the "liberalisation" that has taken place. Whether in matters of sex, abortion, or what used to pass for normality or abnormality, Western societies display a tolerance that, looked at in the light of history, can be described as extreme. This tolerance, which varies according to the social milieu, is not and can never be total. The law punishes the corruption of minors. If man is regarded as "a machine with desires", Western society, like all known societies, remains repressive (the socialist societies of Eastern Europe are even more so).

"Anti-psychiatry" is another application of Tocqueville's Law. To some the mental asylum, that total institution, appears to be the despotic institution *par excellence*. But "despotic" is not quite the right term; constraining, totalistic, would be more appropriate. In one sense the protests on behalf of criminals in prison and the insane in mental asylums testify to a more sensitive moral conscience, a respect for the human personality even when it has lost its integrity or is paying for a crime committed. The pessimistic sociologists—of whom Pareto is the most famous—would, nevertheless, have pointed to a number of symptoms they would have regarded as ill-omened, heralding the collapse of the established order: *i.e.*, greater sympathy shown to criminals than to their victims or their judges; the reduction in the number and severity of penalities; the denunciation, not of the criminal, but of society, which is regarded as guilty by definition; in short, the state of mind that has been called "*humanitarisme*."

Liberty, Licence, Permissiveness

THE PRESENT SITUATION (or, at any rate, certain aspects of it) would have surprised Pareto and probably aroused his indignation. From one fashionable point of view, the isolation of criminals or of the insane is not an example of bourgeois humanitarianism, but a cruel and subtle form of repression. Prison is worse than the galleys ever were; the social distance between classes is worse than that of the estates in the *ancien régime*; *la cour des miracles*, the medieval forum for beggars and madmen, more civilised than the mental hospital; and bands of mercenaries less loathsome than the barracks and the discipline imposed on 18th-century soldiers. Who cannot discern an element of truth in each of these claims? What we are faced with at the present day, in fact, is a revolt against total institutions—the asylums, the prisons, the barracks—which treat the whole man in terms of a specific feature of his being or his job—the asylum inmate of a mental hospital as if his insanity extended to the whole of his personality, as if he no longer possessed any of the reactions and feelings of so-called normal people. In this sense our century of tortures, which is the century of Verdun, of the Holocaust, of the Gulag Archipelago, is at the same time marked by an extreme solicitude for the excluded, to the point of actually rejecting the very idea of madmen or criminals, on the pretext that there has been no unanimously accepted definition of madness or criminality through the centuries. So far as morals are concerned, Tocqueville's Law obviously applies, with the ambiguous consequences always to be observed in such cases.

Among the intelligentsia and the upper classes the favourite subject for denunciation is the survival of taboos, while in the middle and even the working class it is open and aggressive liberalisation (*e.g.*, permitted pornography) that most incurs reprobation. Sometimes there is an alliance between the upper class and the most disinherited. Elite Americans declare themselves in favour of mixed schooling for blacks and whites (but send their own children to private schools); it is the lower-middle or working class that has to put up with its children being sent by bus to mixed schools that are often distant and of low educational standard.

Similarly, in France it is the intellectual class of the bourgeoisie that opposes the death penalty, criticises the prison system most bitterly, and denounces racism. The middle or lower classes, who benefit less from the established order than the upper classes, tend to a simpler (and also a more severe) morality than the intellectuals and the privileged. The Victorian bourgeoisie did not show this sensibility, nor did the Catholic bourgeoisie of the north of France. In the USA and in France, the upper class and the high officials are mostly on the side of the progressive intellectuals, favouring tolerance in all its forms rather than prohibitions and traditional obligations. Is this progress towards liberty, or loss of the traditional virtues necessary for the privileged to retain their historic role? The reply is the more uncertain since the two interpretations need not conflict. Moral progress does not exclude historical decline.

In the eyes of dissidents from the Soviet Union, of Solzhenitsyn and probably also of Sakharov if he were forced to emigrate, certain aspects of Western freedom—pornographic films and magazines, the prying, peeping daily press—deserve no respect and call for no emulation. They are an expression of licence, and might

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represent a price that has to be paid for the precious benefits of liberty.

BUT, IN SPITE OF EVERYTHING, Tocqueville's Law does not account for the success of this theory of the repressive society; or, at any rate, a different interpretation of it is required. Total institutions tend to decline, to become less total, to move in the direction of specificity. The barracks claim only part of the soldier's time and activity. A first breach in the penal system is permission given to prisoners to leave prison from time to time. A prisoner sentenced to a five-year term does not spend five years in his cell; he may be granted special days or weeks of leave, and early parole. Similar breaches are opening up in the mental hospital system, and at the same time the authorities are tending here and there to introduce into both total institutions activities or distractions similar to those of the outside world with a view to minimising exclusion from the latter as far as possible. Pushed to its logical conclusion, prisoners or the insane would suffer only the specific consequences of their illness or crime. Working outside and returning for bed and breakfast would mark the extreme form of prisoners' non-exclusion.

There is a similar trend in non-total institutions, particularly in industry, at the place of work. When Max Weber, in his study of the East German provinces, discovered that Germans preferred factory work, even for lower pay, to working on the big Junker estates, he had no difficulty in finding out why. To use my own vocabulary, the landlord's employees had a feeling of personal dependence on their boss, even if the latter exercised his authority paternalistically. But the factory wage-earner is not so much in the service of an individual as of an anonymous organisation. In any case, he spends his leisure away from his place of work, away from the owner of the means of production. The servants of big landowners greeted industrial proletarisation as a liberation. The problem that arises as this dissociation of social roles becomes increasingly accentuated is the individual's reaction to the "depersonalisation" of all his activities.

I use the term "depersonalisation" in a special sense, of course. No one commits his whole personality to his job. A modern society consists of a large number of partial systems and each individual can belong to several systems, no one being defined by a single role, or even the sum of his roles. Wouldn't such a society, which we can only dimly perceive, become as intolerable as the last traces of the almost humanised prison system?

The Weberian typology of the forms of domination enables me to formulate, probably with excessive rigour, the theory to which I incline. Traditional authority—of fathers, kings, bishops, teachers, of which the unconditional authority of the Pope in matters of dogma is, so to speak, a symbol—has been undermined by the march of ideas and events. Not that it is vanishing altogether, for no society can do without it. But in the family, the school, the university it goes less far than it did; and in the Church it has been shaken. Young people of both sexes who have reached the legal age of majority go on studying in the higher school classes, but they no longer accept as a matter of course the orders of their teachers or of the administration. Their teachers have to win them over; they have to interest or convince them by intelligence, knowledge, or personality. In short, within a system based on knowledge and rational authority, they have to possess some of the qualities of charismatic leaders.

In the United States, where the universities *in loco parentis*, used to have certain characteristics of total institutions, irreversible changes took place in the 1960s. Students do not work less than before; at present they work harder than ever, because of the toughness of the competition that they foresee. In accordance with a custom that is not peculiar to the United States, they stream to some courses and keep away from others; most American students have always paid fees, and thus they acquired the right to choose their teachers and judge them. What has disappeared is the kind of parental authority that used to be exercised by the private universities in particular. Students participate in various ways in university management, or at any rate exercise a vague right of veto on certain appointments and the making of syllabuses. Here too the weakening of tradition gives increased authority to some individuals and simultaneously strips it from others.

Illegitimacy & the Sense of Oppression

MODERN ORGANISATIONS are not all based on traditional authority; on the contrary, the most important of them claim to be rational, do not permit recourse to charismatic authority, and run the risk of becoming oppressive by the mere fact of their rationality. Let us leave aside the only too familiar complaints about repetitive labour, the conveyor belt, that Chaplinesque assembly-line which figures in all denunci-

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ations of the capitalist economy—for they should be aimed at economic industriousness, or *productivisme* as such (as Simone Weil plainly saw). It is the whole enterprise that the individual feels to be oppressive, because he is subjected to its rationality, usually without understanding it. He resents society because of the ups-and-downs of the trade cycle and the fluctuation of prices which oppress everyone. The oppression is anonymous and depersonalised, like the social role that the individual plays in the process of production. Ideological myths—the crimes of monopoly capitalism, the machinations of secret services—perform a psychological function. Philosophers can perhaps manage to detest abstractions (capitalism, imperialism, efficiency), but popular passions want villains of flesh-and-blood —monopolists, slush-funders, wire-pullers, heartless exploiters, and sly manipulators of the masses —on whom the sense of anonymous oppression can focus.

A fraction of the Left intelligentsia has recognised, not without reluctance, that the oppressiveness to a large extent derives from society itself, from the system of production, and that expropriation and nationalisation as such are not enough to alter the condition of individuals either at their place of work or away from it. (Some ideologues, Dr Herbert Marcuse for instance, still advocate public ownership of the means of production though their anti-capitalist indictment could just as validly be directed at the Soviet system of production).

Another section of the Left-wing intelligentsia tries to isolate specifically capitalist features of the Western economies, *e.g.*, the cash-nexus or "the rule of money", the treatment of human labour as a commodity, the determination of status by wealth. In societies of the Soviet type it is in fact the state managers who enjoy economic and financial privileges. They owe their wealth not to economic competition but to success in climbing the hierarchical ladder. The intellectual, artistic, and scientific élites also get whatever money can buy in the Soviet Union (provided they submit to ideological conformism). It is the privileged who have the *entreé* to the shops where the most sought-after goods can be obtained at fairly reasonable prices. In other words, both here *and* there the powerful are rich and the rich powerful, though here wealth leads to power and there it is power that leads to wealth. This is only a slightly caricatured picture of the situation. In the West, administrative or political success (though it ensures privileged status) does not lead to wealth on the Rockefeller or Rothschild scale; and, in the East, economic success (in the Western sense) does not exist in the absence of a free market, but it does exist in the sense in which one speaks of an individual's success in the management of an enterprise.

Whether in matters of morals, or of human rights, material or immaterial (free speech, or freedom to travel abroad, or to organise independent trade unions, or the right to organise voluntary groups to defend interests or make demands), any unbiased observer will agree that "oppression" is much more characteristic of societies of the Soviet than of the Western type. Among the indefatigable denouncers of "oppression in the West" I distinguish a number of different categories:

1. Those who even more vigorously condemn Soviet oppression (a section of the *gauchistes*).

2. Those who criticise the Soviet régime only hesitantly because they remain faithful to the Marxist credo, in particular to a belief in the intrinsic merits of public ownership of the means of production (Herbert Marcuse);

3. Those who at heart do not really care about oppression but detest the liberties enjoyed by individuals and groups in the West;

4. Those who have still not abandoned the Utopian dream in spite of all the historical experiences of our time.

To sum up; there are two major explanations of the simultaneity of two apparent incompatibles, *licence* and *revolt*: Tocqueville's Law—and the nature of modern civilisation itself (which, in one sense *is* oppressive). In fact it imposes anonymous discipline in the framework of the industry in which the individual works—while in the framework of the whole economy it seems to obey a dynamism that is completely uncontrolled. And it may be that many men are better able to tolerate a traditional leader (or a customary authority) than an authority which simply claims to be "necessary" or justifies itself by a rationality that most people are unable to recognise and understand. Perhaps the cult of pop heroes, of stars, and the whole personalisation of politics testify to the need of a charismatic authority in the absence of the traditional authority which has been gradually eroded in every field: the Family, the Church, the University, the State.

AT THE SAME TIME a rather essential question presents itself. To what extent do individuals regard themselves as "oppressed" because they come to question the legitimacy of a political and economic régime? Is the decisive factor, explaining the behaviour of the trade unions and the relative strength of the West's Communist parties, a matter of the acceptance or refusal of democratic legitimacy? Or is it simply a matter of accepting or rejecting the private ownership of the means of production?

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10. Between Socialism & Capitalism

OF ALL THE COUNTRIES of the West the only one that seems to be proof against Revolution, the only one in which freedoms are apparently not threatened by any party or group of importance, is the United States. Why is this so?

The Anglo-American states before federating appealed to "the rights of man", basing themselves on their nonconformist faith. But the individual's freedom to interpret the scriptures in his own way did not entail the same freedom in matters of morals or morality. Tocqueville was struck by the link between democracy (*le sentiment égalitaire*) and political liberty; and religion was the intermediary. It was a stern and rigid, sometimes Puritanical religion, at the opposite pole to the laxity prevalent today.

If religion has lost its hold on a large part of the population of the United States without the régime being shaken that is because since the beginning of the 19th century it has played a role that a French aristocratic observer could not foresee. The Americans whom Tocqueville studied were Anglo-Americans. Since his time millions of immigrants have flooded into the promised land across the sea—Italian, Polish, Irish, and Ukrainian peasants, Catholics and Jews. They were given American citizenship and US passports, and citizenship was inseparable from respect for the Constitution. You are born German or French; you become American; and if you are disloyal to the essence of citizenship, which is respect for the Constitution, you cease to be American.

None of the historic nations of Europe grant the press a degree of freedom comparable to that of the American press. None of them puts laws above men, judges above governments, human rights above actual laws; and none possesses a Supreme Court comparable to that of the United States. Nowhere else is the legitimacy of political and economic institutions so deeply rooted.

The French Cage

IN FRANCE POLITICAL WRITERS of no party affiliation from Tocqueville to Ernest Renan deplored the never-ending constitutional conflict; between *monarchie* and *république*, between *monarchie légitime* and other royal claims between *république* and *empire*. The passions aroused by these questions split the privileged classes and explain the revolutions of the 19th century. Only Napoleon III had the good sense to base his reign on universal suffrage. At a time when France was still a rural country it was sufficient to guarantee the gains that had been made by the peasant class to be certain of an enormous majority. The political descendants of forty kings were never willing to base their régime on a type of legitimacy that was incompatible with their tradition.

Democratic legitimacy based on the elected representative system now enjoys unanimous assent. The last counter-revolutionary challenge to it, that of 1940 at Vichy, did not last even until the total occupation of France. The followers of Charles Maurras or the 19th-century counter-revolutionaries had lost their influence before Pierre Laval's return to government in April 1942. A monarchist or Maurras-type press of sorts survives on the fringe of the political or intellectual class; but there is nothing comparable to what *l'Action française* amounted to from the end of the 19th century to 1941.

Rejection of democratic legitimacy is to be found at the other end of the political spectrum, among *les gauchistes* who in May 1968 proclaimed that elections were equivalent to treason. From their point of view, they were right. The Bolsheviks did not prevent elections to the Constituent Assembly but, as they won fewer than 20% of the seats in it, they soon liquidated it. The Communist party loudly proclaim their present and future respect for representative democracy. There is no guarantee, of course, that they would keep their word and resign themselves to the loss of an election—if circumstances enabled them to reject the verdict of the ballot box. But the official statements of the Party at least tend to show that democratic legitimacy is underwritten by the vast majority of Frenchmen.

In the economic field the situation is different. Neither private ownership of the means of production (or "free enterprise", as the Americans call it), nor the mechanisms of the market, nor the present distribution of incomes commands a degree of assent comparable to that which maintains representative democracy. Max Weber, among others, drew attention to the elective affinity, the stylistic relationship, between the economic free market and electoral competition. Political pundits are very apt to use economic concepts in analysing political life, leaving to radical economists the use of socio-political ideas for the interpretation of phenomena such as exploitation. As democracy and the claims of individuals and groups develop, the contrast between political equality and the economic

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inequality that is inseparable from the free market seems shocking, or at any rate less and less tolerable.

At the same time the idea of private property, to which the vast majority of Frenchmen are still attached in connection with such matters as inheritance, or their house or flat, becomes suspect in business, particularly big business. The liquidation of a bankrupt concern can suddenly become a national problem if several hundred workers lose their jobs; the Lip affair expressed and symbolised a widespread state of mind. In short, while political power based on elections remains legitimate in present-day France, the legitimacy of power in industry—and consequently throughout the economy—is disputed and uncertain.

The employers plead for free enterprise and try to persuade public opinion that that liberty is no different from others. But for circumstantial reasons in the past few years (there are deeper ones if one takes a longer-term view) they only partially succeed.

THE FRENCH ECONOMY is one of the most nationalised of all the Western economies. It embraces all the different meanings of the term *étatisée*. A large sector of the productive apparatus is publicly owned; governments do not restrict themselves to general measures (budgeting and credit control) to maintain the overriding equilibrium, but take specific decisions such as choosing the type of telephone system to be adopted or setting-up special industrial groupings. Civil servants, at a certain stage in their career, willingly move to the private sector. The administrative minority that controls French capitalism is recruited from *polytechniciens* and *énarques*. It is no longer possible to make any clear distinction between civil servants, managers of the para-state sector, and the alleged "monopolists" who (according to Communist propaganda) are the truly guilty or, if one prefers it, the *incarnation du principe du mal*. To the extent that the public would only think of another Renault, the nationalisation of any particular group would not in itself startle anyone.

Apart from the features peculiar to the French economy, the so-called "private" structure of big concerns is no longer justified by "property rights", since those who own them in the eyes of the law, that is to say, the shareholders, exercise practically no influence on the management (or even, except in unusual circumstances, on the choice of managers). The case for the private ownership of industrial giants rests on its efficiency, the advantages of separating political and economic power, and the desire not to give governments excessive responsibility. But a conditional and utilitarian legitimacy does not provide a solid foundation for the established order or inspire vigorous opposition to those who may one day wish to overthrow it.

With the possible exception of the West German Social Democrats, who defend and indeed exemplify the theory of the social market economy (an Erhardian invention of the Christian Democrats), the men and parties who form the governments of Western Europe feel no affection for the liberal economy. Moreover, some Socialists count on private industry to create the wealth that they propose subsequently to redistribute along egalitarian lines.* Other Socialists, in the absence of private enterprises from which enough wealth to redistribute can be generated, enlarge the public sector in the hope of managing it more efficiently and on principles other than those applied in the private field. And, finally, non-Socialists (like the majority in France) repeat Socialist slogans in a diluted form, talking of "reforming private enterprise" instead of nationalising it and "reducing inequalities" instead of redistributing incomes. Not that the French majority resembles the Swedish Social Democrats either in its origins or its actions. But some of its spokesmen would gladly adopt the "Swedish model" as its ideal, its guarantee, failing to appreciate that they are compromising their cause by appealing to a model so remote from French reality.

Some Inevitabilities

EUROPEAN SOCIETIES and their institutions will most probably develop in the direction of a certain type of socialism (in the broad, vague sense of the term). This, reduced to the minimum imposed by political democracy, involves: state intervention to ensure an overall balance, to manage the business cycle, and minimise the impact on particular social groups of unexpected fluctuations; social legislation guaranteeing fundamental rights, especially in the fields of education and health; a direct, progressive (not proportional) system of taxation; and a more-or-less extensive public sector would also probably have to be added to this list.

Minimal Socialism does not prevent the functioning of an economy open to the outside world; the exceptional post-War phase made it compatible with rapid growth. But the events of the past few years illustrate the difficulty that representative democracies have in coping with

* This is the case in Sweden, where a few families have been left in control of a number of big industrial groups with an international market.

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la lutte des classes for the largest possible share of the national income in a period of crisis; they also illustrate the danger of an acceleration of the inflationary process resulting from the fact that expectations of a price rise precipitate the upward movement that everyone foresees. Without deciding between the various theories of inflation, we may point to three major trends all of which in a country like France offer a challenge to the régime.

In the first place, the weakness of the state increases *pari passu* with the extension of the functions it tries to fulfil. In Britain the Labour Government secured the cooperation of the trade unions only when a total currency collapse seemed imminent. Between 1974 and 1976 neither Valéry Giscard d'Estaing nor Jacques Chirac even tried to keep wage rises down to the level of price rises. In 1975 wage increases in the para-state sector were about 16% while retail price increases were about 10%.

Secondly, freedoms are not nowadays only *against* the state, as they were in the 18th century, but are proclaimed both *against* and *by* it. The Communists themselves swear by all their gods that they will protect citizens *from* the police, *from* computers, *from* censorship, *from* bureaucratic high-handedness—in short, that they will maintain the sphere of individual autonomy, preserve the principle of participation in public affairs through elections, and at the same time increase individual and collective liberties. And what do these new liberties consist of but either an extension of social rights (in the fields of health, education, *etc.*) or an increase in the powers given to organised interests—to trade unions, to workers' councils (*against* the management), or to mass parties (*against* the rulers)?

The social freedoms that result from individual or group capacity for action are always liable to encroach on the civil liberties inherited from the bourgeois world. In fact they lead logically to egalitarianism between individuals and competition for power between groups. If personal liberty is rooted in the capacity for effective action, the logic of liberty leads inevitably to the claim to equality of condition.

Now, the desire to reduce and if possible abolish inequalities in the human condition leads, if only by creating an illusion, to hostility to the free market, to private property, and by extension to individual initiative. Practically no one (even among those who appeal to liberal principles) dares sing the praises of the true *entrepreneur*—members of the species still survive, like those who in France founded *Moulinex* or *Carrefour* on the basis of a technical or commercial idea. The societies of Western Europe still benefit from the contrast with the Soviet Union, but it is individual initiative, the opportunity given to individuals to prove themselves, that justifies liberal society, not negatively as the lesser evil, but positively, because of certain merits.

THE TENSION BETWEEN EQUALITY and liberty is part of the classical tradition of political philosophy. In one sense experience has not confirmed the contradiction. Socialism of the Soviet type, even if, according to certain calculations, it diminishes inequality in the distribution of incomes, creates a bigger gap between the Party apparatus and the ordinary worker than that, say, which separates the French worker from his employer. On the other hand, the least inegalitarian Western societies—the Scandinavian, for instance—seem to be free of the totalitarian threat, while France and Italy (where the distribution of incomes is held to be *more* unequal) are both exposed to the danger of a Communist party coming into power.

I do not deny these facts, though the causal relationship between inequality and the strength of the Communist party in France does not seem to me to be either as direct or as obvious as socialists suggest. In spite of everything, the ideological obsession with equality seems to me to conflict in the long term with the survival of a liberal-spirited society.

Each of us establishes a hierarchy among men, their activities and merits. Inequality of incomes nowhere reflects the hierarchy of values—either that postulated by the dominant social or moral doctrine or that of any particular group. Western societies are criticised, not without exaggeration, for subordinating all other hierarchies to the hierarchy of money. They could be criticised just as severely for abandoning a sound definition of equality—that it is every human being's right to be treated as a human being—in favour of a false and even absurd one—that there is an equality of value between good and bad, the creator and the imitator, the few who because of their work or their qualities rise above their fellows and the innumerable crowds of the mediocre.

It would be absurd to claim that in a liberal society the hierarchy of incomes reflects that of merits or values. But that is not the liberal argument. Liberals say that this inequality *exists*, that it does *not* conflict with what is sound in the idea of human equality, that no society can establish a single hierarchy that does justice both to the different services rendered to the community and to the variety of rewards. Subject to certain limitations, the liberal accepts the decisions of the market; his concern above all is to ensure that the multiplicity of hierarchies survives. It does not

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rouse his fiery indignation if a writer of detective novels makes a fortune while a poet sells only a few hundred copies of his latest collection. What he fears above all is that a group of men should set themselves up as supreme arbiters, laying down the law both about the distribution of incomes and about literary or artistic merit. The liberal must have the courage to proclaim that while he tries to do away with abject poverty, he does not reject "inequality", or rather inequalities.

As for freedom (or ability) for group action, it would be more accurate to describe this as power. It can be asserted only at the expense of the power of others. Workers' representatives in big industrial organisations serve on committees endowed with different degrees of authority in different countries. This liberty to "participate" at the place of work comes up against two obstacles: the requirements of efficiency and the refusal of some trade unions to observe the rules of the game within the framework of the existing system. Here again the trend is against any personal initiative which does not stem from authority.

THE THIRD TREND (which I believe I have observed in Universities and in the Church) seems to confirm an idea of Joseph Schumpeter. He foresaw the decline of capitalism, as a result not of its failure but of its successes. The factors that create a favourable social context in which the liberal economy can prosper are, he wrote, relics of the *ancien régime*, of a social order based on attitudes and beliefs radically different from those of merchants, *entrepreneurs,* or economists. Neither the pursuit of gain nor utilitarian calculation, he believed, would give officials, from police inspectors to financial inspectors, a morality adequate to their function.

DISINTERESTEDNESS, self-sacrifice, dedication to the public good with no sanction other than a good conscience, these are all virtues associated with a traditional world. They seem quite alien to the motivations of typical representatives of modern civilisation, whether in relation to the Dionysian desires for enjoyment of the consumers or to the Promethean ambition of the producers.

Must we, then, conclude with Edmund Burke that "the age of chivalry is gone"? Can it be that "that of the sophisters, economists and calculators has succeeded", and that "the glory of Europe is extinguished for ever . . ."?

11. In the Shadow of the Red Army

WHAT DOES WESTERN DEMOCRACY consist of, not in theory but in practice? Causing a government to emerge from a political struggle between parties or men (more or less closely linked to parties)? The paradox or contradiction is that the man for whom half the French electorate votes becomes President of the whole French nation. Or again, the coalition that gains most votes in a propaganda battle against one or several parties takes charge of the whole country; and in the name of the majority principle secures the obedience even of those who voted for the other side.

In the post-Stalin period at the beginning of the 1960s the theory of liberalisation or democratisation (the two ideas were not clearly distinguished) enjoyed some favour. Relying on the indisputable fact that there is a correlation between "countries with a high standard of living" and "representative democracy", commentators concluded that as a result of prosperity the Soviet Union would inevitably become democratic. This prognostication contained various nuances, but was usually given without a fixed date, so that it could not be falsified by delays in its fulfilment. Events have persuaded the optimists to revise their forecasts, and to envisage delays of a quite different order of magnitude.

It may be that there are cycles in the amount of toleration granted to writers and artists; periods of expansion are followed by periods of contraction. In spite of everything, the overriding trend in the Soviet Union is away from the Lysenko Affair or the Great Purge. I do not claim that nothing of the sort could ever happen again. So long as a handful of men decides the fate of all in the name of a Party which claims a monopoly of political truth the situation will vary in accordance with the inclinations of the faction in control. The fact remains that that *équipe* will do everything in its power to prevent one man possessing the power that was accumulated by Stalin, and that it is no longer confronted with tasks comparable to the collectivisation of agriculture. The Great Purge followed, it is true; but, whatever the causes may have been (and the question remains open) it presupposes a No. 1 such as Stalin. An *équipe* could not decimate the Party ranks as the Father of the Peoples did.

Does it follow that the hour of liberalisation has struck in the Soviet Union? Can one imagine a Soviet equivalent of the process that has now begun in Spain? Definitely not. The Franco

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régime appealed to a principle of unity and claimed to be the mediator between classes, doctrines, and social and ideological conflicts. It did not claim to have created a New Man, or a State of the Whole People confounded with society itself. Sixty years after its seizure of power the Communist party continues the revolution of which Marx was the prophet and Lenin the leader. It cannot tolerate without risk to itself any questioning of the ideology in the name of which it spilled so much blood, built so many factories, liquidated so much of the past.

The Soviet ideocracy can certainly restrict the field of its own hegemony, and in comparison with the madness of the Stalin period it has already done so. We no longer hear of Marxist mathematics, Leninist physics, or Stalinist biology. But in politics and historiography there is still only one official truth.

Here, too, various self-limitations are conceivable. Atheism is an integral part of Marxism-Leninism, and without officially abandoning it the men of the Kremlin could soft-pedal their anti-religious propaganda, as they did during the Great Patriotic War, and could drop the persecution of believers.

The Scope of "Liberalisation"

I DO NOT DENY the existence in the Soviet Union of germs of "liberalisation", but I hesitate to apply the same term to what the King of Spain and his advisers have done in a matter of months and what Stalin's successors have permitted during 20 years. In post-Franco Spain the authorities said what they wanted to do, began doing it, and transformed a personal dictatorship into a pluralist democracy. In the post-Stalin USSR the old structures persist. There can be no question of agreeing to a peaceful coexistence of ideologies, of surrendering Marxism-Leninism's claim to universality, or of admitting that the régime established by Lenin is one among others and does not now represent the whole people, just as before it was not a "dictatorship of the proletariat." There is no question of officially tolerating any other ideology or the legitimacy of any other faith by reducing Marxism-Leninism to the prosaic status of just one point of view among many. Can this only be a difference of *pace* in the liberalising process common to both? For the time being the differences far outweigh the resemblances, in respect of both the intentions of the protagonists and the reforms they have actually carried out. Soviet reforms were directed towards the elimination of pathological excrescences from the system rather than at its liberalisation.

Without denying the path travelled from 1953–77, it seems to me that the essential point, characteristic of the régime, is that the men of the Kremlin are doing their utmost to guard against the danger inherent in relations with the West by ordering "vigilance" and "ideological struggle." Computers are bought from the decadent West (which is perhaps thought all the more degenerate because it sells them). Incorrigibles—Jews and intellectuals (and intellectual Jews in particular)—are got rid of by being sent abroad instead of to somewhere in Siberia. This is certainly progress, both intrinsically and from the dissidents' point of view. But it expresses the same state of mind: there is no place in Soviet society for those who do not at least passively subscribe to the creed (and it is nowadays a creed which almost nowhere inspires true faith).

At the same time I see the germs of two kinds of pluralism. One of the characteristics of the Stalinist and, perhaps, in general of the Soviet form of government is that secondary problems have had to be dealt with at the top. The Politburo has had to make decisions which in other systems would be made at lower level. Concentration redoubled centralisation. According to some Western observers, the Brezhnev *équipe* allows a narrow but growing margin of autonomy to sub-systems and now favours decisions that specialists consider to be rational.* Also, in spite of all hindrances, the West—with its cars and Rolling Stones, its abstract painting and analytical philosophy, its drugs and pornography, its permanent unrest and frequent crises, its sexual freedom and *joie de vivre*—is finding its way across the closed frontiers and gradually acquiring a place for itself inside a world which the men of the Kremlin wished to preserve from such harmful emanations.

The Spectre of Liberty

WHATEVER IMPLICATIONS are attributed to these phenomena, there is a simple but, in my view, fundamental idea that all historians ought to accept. *Political time does not move at the same rate on the two sides of the demarcation line.* A régime that represents an extension of the line of Asian despotisms—or, if a description less charged with ideological resonance is preferred, a military empire subject to a centralised bureaucracy—is one of the most durable and stable forms of political organisation known to history

* Jerry F. Hough, "The Brezhnev Era, the Man and the System", *Problems of Communism*, March–April 1976.

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so long as the governing class remains united and the masses remain convinced of their impotence. The governing class in the Soviet Union, unlike its predecessor before 1917, does not owe allegiance to a No. 1 designated by birth. Thus it has not found a solution to what is called "the succession problem." Also it is threatened by the excesses of a gerontocracy. Nevertheless it managed the transition from one *équipe* to another, from Khrushchev to Brezhnev, by a subtle combination of ballots and conspiracy.

A whole Russian century passed from the Decembrist Plot to the abdication of the Tsar, and the latter was the direct consequence of a war whose weight and duration was too much for an empire shaken by economic problems, Western ideas, and a monarch's weakness. There is no reason why the Soviet ideocracy should turn out to be less vulnerable to the *Zeitgeist* or immune to the attrition of time than other régimes recorded in the historical annals of the centuries. But there is also no reason why the Soviet ideocracy, a revised form of the Empire of the Tsars, should finish up as a Western democracy as if the latter were somehow its secret essence. So long as Russia goes on governing the heterogeneous nationalities that now constitute more than 50% of its population, democracy will imply a threat to the Empire and the risk of bringing about its disintegration. Even liberalisation is likely to set limits to the development of "bourgeois nationalism." Dissidents from the Soviet Union often clash on the subject of "national liberties." Solzhenitsyn is Russian, Plyushch Ukrainian; the latter does not claim Ukrainian independence, but if citizens were given a free vote and various groups started putting forward demands, where would autonomy stop? For the foreseeable future (*i.e.* from now to the end of the century)—barring an accident of a kind that I think improbable, such as armed hostilities with China, or a war of succession—Western Europe will be faced with a Soviet Union which will refuse ideological coexistence and will keep the corrupting influence of Western liberties within narrow limits.

IN EASTERN EUROPE, between the Soviet frontier and the demarcation line, the situation is rather different. Three countries, the East German Democratic Republic, Bulgaria, and Romania, seem to compete in ideological-political rigour with the Soviet Union itself. The first has given planned economic management an efficiency that it possesses nowhere else and enjoys the highest standard of living in the whole area. A fragment of Germany, condemned to eternal friendship with its conqueror of yesterday, the DDR exists as a state or political entity only by virtue of its régime. Whether it likes it or not, it has to commit itself to ideocracy if it is to exist otherwise than as an Occupation Zone. Ceaucescu uses ideological strictness as a kind of surety for a foreign policy that demonstrates Romanian independence spectacularly from time to time. Romania did not break off relations with Israel, or accept COMECON decisions, or the division of labour within the Soviet bloc that the Kremlin and Pankov desired. To make up for this, the Romanian party is all the more relentless and pitiless as a repository of power and truth. Of all the nations of Eastern Europe Bulgaria is with good reason held to be the most favourably disposed towards Russia. It imitates Big Brother.

The question of "liberalisation" definitely arises in Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia. The working masses brought the reign of the Gomulka *équipe* to an end by rioting; and they exercised a kind of veto for the second time when the Gierek *équipe* decided to increase food prices in June 1976 (involving a big drop in the standard of living). Supplementing, though not uniting with, the intermittent opposition of the working masses is the *fronde* of intellectuals which can sometimes break into open revolt. When the Party wanted to write an eternal alliance with the Soviet Union into the Constitution, the intellectuals publicly protested and won their point. Workers and intellectuals are both very well aware that geography leaves the country no choice in the matter of which camp it must belong to. Nevertheless they remain primarily Poles, Catholics, and rebels against ideological discipline (especially when it comes from Bolshevik Holy Russia), and in 1976–77 various opponents united against the régime for the first time.

The revolt of 1956 taught the Hungarians the limits of the amount of liberalisation acceptable to the Kremlin. Nevertheless the Hungary of 1977 is the most liberal of the Socialist countries; its citizens travel abroad more freely and discussion of Western ideas in Hungarian universities is more open than elsewhere. Janos Kadar's government shields Hungarians from Soviet domination while guaranteeing the country's loyalty to the Muscovite imperium in the eyes of the men of the Kremlin. It lays down the frontiers of tolerable and tolerated liberalisation.

Czechoslovakia, like Hungary, suffered a temporary lapse. Brezhnev no more accepted the "Prague spring" than Khrushchev had accepted the "Budapest autumn", though no shot had been fired in the Czech capital and the change of majority in the Party's central committee had taken place in accordance with "Socialist legality." The Revisionists considered themselves to be Marxists, indeed Marxist-Leninists; they wanted to change the way in which the economy was

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managed; and they proclaimed and practised freedom of speech and freedom of the press. That was probably the unforgivable sin that led to the intervention of the Warsaw Pact armies, for those freedoms undermined the Party's leading role, since the freedom of the press was being derived from everyone's right to say what he believed to be true. The famous 2,000-word statement—the very phrase "twenty years of lies"—probably did more than the proposed reforms of the Plan to provoke the repressive decision.

Thus in one sense one might paraphrase Marx today and declare that a spectre is haunting Europe—the spectre of *Liberty*. Yet one must add that the old continent is still haunted by another spectre—the spectre of Communism in the form of the Red Army.

Power and Its Uncertainties

ENOUGH ABOUT IDEOLOGY: what gives the Soviet Union its stature at the present time, even more than Marxism or *sinistrisme*, is its military power. Like it or not, it has the largest Army and the most modern Navy, if not the most sophisticated weaponry. There are two years' obligatory military service in the Army, two to three years in the Navy and the frontier guards. The Soviet Union has 845 ballistic missiles in 78 submarines, 1,527 inter-continental ballistic missiles, 600 medium-range missiles (most of them on its Western frontiers). It has 50 armoured divisions, 111 infantry divisions, 7 airborne divisions and 41,000 tanks; in Eastern Europe it has 31 Grade 1 divisions (up to three-quarters of them on war footing).* The United States is still in the lead in nuclear arms; it has more warheads, because it was the first to introduce the MIRV technique. The Soviet Union, with a national product amounting to only about 50 or 60% of that of the United States, has a military machine comparable to that of its rival.

I refrain from extreme hypotheses—*e.g.* the Soviet régime, being unable to raise the level of national consumption, has taken refuge in "a flight forward" into the only sector in which it (at any rate, relatively) excels and in which it concentrates its best brains and great financial resources. Nor do I rely on the Leningrad economists' or Sakharov's high estimates of the percentage of national product devoted to defence. I confine myself to the interpretation most favourable to the leaders in the Kremlin, namely that they maintain an Army of nearly two million men *par habitude*, to maintain numerical superiority on the central front facing Western Europe as well as technical superiority in the Asian East, facing the People's Republic of China. Their nuclear and naval effort was the immediate result of their realisation of American superiority at the time of the Cuba crisis, combined with their basic "structural" ambition to catch up with and overtake the United States in "overall" or per capita production. This ambition dates back to Stalin and was often proclaimed by Khrushchev. As the intrinsic weaknesses of the Soviet economy were increasingly revealed, the leaders fell back on armaments and military might.

There is a growing contrast between the ballistic missiles, the armoured divisions, that brand-new fleet, and the living conditions of the citizens throughout the Empire, in which everyday shopping is still an ordeal or an adventure. The contradiction between the evident wealth of the state and the relative poverty of the masses becomes more and more accentuated. Even Left-wing intellectuals in the West—who remained so blind and deaf for so many years—have finally surrendered to the evidence. If they remain prisoners of *sinistrisme* it is not because of but in spite of the Soviet experience.

WHY DO THE KREMLIN LEADERS reject reforms which have improved living conditions in Eastern Europe?

All the evidence goes to show that men like Stalin and Beria, *apparatchiks* and men of power, revealed their innermost thoughts in now proverbial formulas like: "How many divisions has the Pope?" They saw nothing but power relations between classes and nations—and in that they were not disloyal to Marx's own spirit.

Pride of Empire probably weighs more heavily nowadays in the minds of the men of the Politburo than Marxist millenarianism. Even in Lenin's time the Bolsheviks assumed the heritage of the empire of the Tsars to the extent of subduing by armed force a socialist republic (Georgia) in which Menshevik government had established itself. Brezhnev and his companions probably tend to despise "decadent Europe", in which armies tolerate the Bohemianism peculiar to the young and governments do not exercise authority over their own lawyers and judges. Why should they waver, as we do? If it is in the West that workers' productivity is highest, it is also in the West that social cohesion has been most shaken.

Why should we believe that they have doubts both about their own success and about the West? Sixty years after the storming of the Winter

* I quote these figures from the pamphlet *The Military Balance 1976-77*, published annually by the International Institute for Strategic Studies (London).

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Palace the Bolshevik party presides over the destinies of a vast empire stretching from Vladivostok to Weimar, and its ideology has spread over five continents. Who in Lenin's circle in 1917 would have been sure of such a triumph? But 60 years after a Proletarian Socialist Revolution that same Party confines its population within its frontiers and, in spite of "proletarian internationalism", forbids it to go outside them to see and compare and take a look for themselves. What a humiliation! "Soviets plus electricity", Lenin said. All trace of the original "Soviets" has vanished; there is no lack of electricity; but wheat has to be imported from the American Middle West. Where is the obvious superiority of Socialism?

WHY IS THE KREMLIN so mortally afraid of economic reforms and intellectual liberalisation? No question is more difficult to answer. In regard to agriculture I incline to the view that the explanation is dogmatism and the power of the bureaucracy. In the field of ideas the great difficulty seems to be that of setting limits and knowing where to stop. The repercussions of Khrushchev's speech in Eastern Europe showed the men in the Kremlin the danger of admitting what they know to be true, of saying aloud what had previously only been spoken in whispers. An ideocracy has difficulty in dispensing with the institutionalised lie even if nearly everyone recognises it as such. Finally, the Soviet leaders, unlike those of the popular democracies, have to consider the possible impact of any liberalisation —economic, political, or intellectual—on the unity of their empire.

The present leaders of the Soviet Union, as well as those of tomorrow and the foreseeable future, will remain fiercely hostile to the West because they both envy and despise it. As ideologues they envy its productivity and standard of living; as men of power they despise its permanent unrest, its governments condemned to court the masses, and at the same time they believe that behind the democratic façade the real wire-pulling is still done by a minority, "the monopolists." They find it hard to believe that Richard Nixon was in the last resort overthrown by the press, which was itself alerted by the inquisitiveness of two young and unknown journalists. Such an episode does not fit in with their vision of society.

Whether the situation is cold war or relaxation of tension makes little difference. Failing a special and very favourable opportunity (*e.g.* an American withdrawal), the men of the Kremlin will not plunge into open military aggression* against a decadent but fascinating Western Europe that disappoints the dissidents by its levity, but nevertheless points an accusing finger at a régime that is so unsure of itself that it is afraid of its own citizenry.

In the short term we Europeans run a bigger risk of falling victim to ourselves than to the million Soviet soldiers in Eastern Europe or the thousands of nuclear warheads (why destroy those whom one wishes to subjugate?). Not that Westerners are violently attracted by *la tentation totalitaire*. They are slowly recovering from *sinistrisme*, though plenty of men of thought and opinion, minds great and small, have given up neither their ideological prejudices nor the Left's old "opium of the intellectuals." But it is not enough to reject servitude; the dangers must be seen and faced up to.

Dr Kissinger used to remark that nothing, and nobody, could prevent the historic ascent of the Soviet Union to the front rank. In one sense that may be true. The masters of a huge empire who exercise despotic power in the name of an ideology with universalist claims have sufficient freedom of action to be able to devote to the army, the navy, and the construction of ballistic missiles the thousands of millions of roubles necessary to their ambitions. Their industry manufactures tanks, guns and missiles of a quality comparable to that of Western armies (even though the Americans keep their lead in the most advanced technologies, electronics, for instance, by continual innovations).

But that empire belongs to another age—unless our age is still an age of slaves and conquerors. That is the sense in which it conflicts with our idea of modern civilisation, and it is this that Dr Kissinger's world-pessimism overlooked. The militarisation of Soviet society has gone further than ever before, and Castroism in Cuba is following the example of Leninism in Russia. Sovietism is marked today by the failure of the hopes it roused and the proliferation of the totalitarian potentialities inherent from the start in the model of a planned economy. Bakunin saw from the first one of the possibilities to which Marx's thought ultimately leads: the barracks society. Compared with the West, there is still a rough and crude quality about Soviet society which gives it an obvious stability and sharply differentiates it from the society in which we live, which is open to all the winds, progresses from crisis to crisis, and always runs the risk of destroying itself by its passion for self-criticism.

* This does not, of course, prevent Soviet armaments from influencing the course of diplomacy, nor does it protect Western Europe (though its governments seem to overlook this) from the possibility of being directly threatened by developing conflicts in Africa or the Middle East.

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I SUSPECT THAT THE WEST will have several more years of economic crisis and moral malaise to go through before it finds a new equilibrium. Inequality in the rates of inflation involves a threat of disintegration to the European and the Atlantic Communities. The redeployment of the productive apparatus made necessary by the increased price of oil and raw materials is taking place slowly. The sharing of sacrifices tests the always fragile cohesion of the liberal democracies. Prosperity depends on investment, and business invests only in conditions which trade-union power and pay claims do not always permit governments to create; and governments, in their turn, tend to react to unemployment and inflation with measures that aggravate those evils. In this respect *le mal Anglais* lies in wait for all the Western economies, that is, the temptation, on the pretext of redistributing wealth or under the pressure of interest groups, to increase the state share in the national product to a point at which the private sector, short of capital or forced to replace expensive labour by machines, becomes incapable of offering enough jobs; and bureaucracies swell all the more quickly as more candidates for non-manual jobs are turned out by the universities.

AT THE END OF THIS DISMAL ROAD there will be two alternatives: a choice between imitating the *travaillisme* of the British Labour Party, which is still liberal but is incapable of creating wealth, and borrowing the despotic Soviet methods which enable the authorities, instead of satisfying material needs, to feed the people with vast imperial ambitions. To Western Europe Socialism means, and can only mean, irreversible decline or the path to slavery. In the Soviet form it would involve absorption in the so-called Socialist world market; in the Labour form it would represent a mere intermediate phase which could not last more than a few years. The British will either re-establish a productive section in the market economy or decline into an unproductive economy subject to the joint authority of the trade unions and employers, which, for want of a better term, will have to be called "corporative."

As for France because of its geopolitical position and its moral even more than its economic potential, it will to a large extent determine the survival of the European and Atlantic community. In 1978 it will make what will probably be an historic decision. If the Socialist-Communist coalition wins, the country will enter on one of its mysterious "times of troubles", for which it seems periodically to have a secret longing. The Socialist-Communist programme would exclude for years full cooperation in the European-Atlantic ensemble in which the transformation of our economy has taken place. What matters is not the intentions of M. François Mitterand and his comrades, but the predictable consequences of their proposals. The Socialism they plan exists nowhere and never will exist. The state machinery of the Fifth Republic has all the powers necessary to manage the economy or even to reorganise the productive forces without resorting to nationalisation of the whole banking and insurance system and thus precipitating first a flight of capital, then a closing of frontiers, and finally establishing an *étatisation* of the whole economy that would be compatible in theory but not in practice with French participation in the West's world economy.

What the Socialists have not yet realised—though the Communists have—is that the primary decision facing each country is not national but international. Tell me what world market you want to belong to and I'll tell you who you are. François Mitterand and Michel Rocard fail to appreciate the priorities of fundamental choices, and the left-wing Socialists and the Communist party are counting on this to push the Socialist party where its leaders do not want to take it.

On the other hand, if the present majority reasserts itself, perhaps the Socialist party will at long last end by realising that there is a place for it in a Left-Centre government; and perhaps the present ruling majority will at last realise that they must transcend the present confrontation between two *blocs* and two models of society. Most Frenchmen want no model other than that of a liberal society, and the reforms that they really wish for could be carried out by a Left-Centre majority without running into insuperable obstacles.

While local communities and individuals everywhere want liberalisation, the Socialists (out of ignorance) and the Communists (out of calculation) want to make state power "even more extensive and detailed" than that exercised by any of the historic French Republics. What price will have to be paid to dissuade the French from setting out in a tragic search for fictions and unrealities, for *le socialisme introuvable*?

EVEN BEFORE a victory in the election, the Socialists, for twenty years out of power, have already been dividing the ministries among themselves. In spite of their long exile in the political desert, they seem to have forgotten nothing and learnt nothing. They thrash out the same kind of programme as they did forty years ago, quite disregarding the profound transformation of France during the last quarter-of-a-century. It is as if they were animated—both for themselves and for France—by a suicidal wish.

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Whether it is a question of economy or of defence, France belongs to Europe which neither wishes to, nor indeed can, leave the Atlantic alliance—at least until the day when the Soviet empire, by its dissolution, makes it possible to integrate in Europe countries which are now ruled by régimes imposed from outside.

Thanks to the post-War "miracles", Western Europe has rebuilt on its ruins, has forged a new moral (if not political) unity, has confidently challenged the Soviet Union to open its frontiers to "bourgeois" information and "decadent" ideas. It has regained a perspective into the future. But in the last four years this Europe—whose difficulties, as I have been emphasising, appear minor when compared to the conditions of life which countries under so-called socialism offer to "liberated proletarians"—has begun to have doubts about itself, doubts which can ultimately prove creative or fatal. Social distress risks developing into a crisis of civilisation if society refuses to face economic constraints and the imperatives of collective civic action.

IN THE EAST **despotism does not solve related problems—it simply hides them—and the ideology of official slogans there has become an institutionalised lie. In the West the collective organisations have been putting short-term claims which crowd out all other political and social considerations, to the neglect of everything beyond the immediate material interest of their members. It is as if the distribution of national income had become the exclusive political passion: the State focuses its attention solely on the ways of "slicing the pie" and the individual solely on how much he is to get tomorrow. But this obsession is ultimately incompatible with the larger social purposes which they all pretend to serve.**

Can man find fulfilment unless he transcends himself by looking beyond his ephemeral existence, creating and meeting wider challenges? A hedonistic civilisation, so shortsighted as to devote itself only to the material satisfactions of the day, condemns itself to death when it is no longer interested in the future, and loses thereby its sustaining sense of history.

Funeral Dance

The spire is as perfectly centred
as the black and white priest in the doorway's arch.
Left of centre stands a large yew.
Six staunch bearers pace the path.
On the raw oak box, the shields of flowers
are heraldic crests that mock
our claims. Outside the gates
the mourners make two half moons.

Bach could have set it as a four-part fugue
but for the two shapeless figures
in sullen grey who stumble, unsynchronised
after the coffin, breaking the dance,
draining the colour out of the grass,
making the priest seem sawdust and silk,
neutralising spire, yew tree, arch.

Diana Hendry

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Conor Cruise O'Brien

Liberty and Terror

Illusions of Violence, Delusions of Liberation

THE SITUATIONS I should like to consider are those in which democratic governments, working under the rule of law, are confronted by armed revolutionary organisations seeking to attain political objectives by the use of violence, and through the terror which violence inspires.

In such struggles, each side sees itself as upholding the cause of liberty; but the idea of liberty is differently defined by each side, and with widely different degrees of precision.

Supporters of the democratic system—be they conservative, liberal, or social-democratic supporters—see that system as providing more effective guarantees of liberty, and a more effective demonstration of liberty in action, than any other known political system. The guarantees are seen to reside, not only in the electorate's periodically available capacity to change its political rulers, but more importantly in the permanent necessity under which these rulers find themselves to try to please a majority of the ruled, and also in the further constraints placed on the rulers by the legal system, by the independence of the judiciary, and by the accredited values and conventions of the liberal and democratic tradition.

There is no need at this point to enlarge on these conceptions: presumptions in favour of democracy are taken for granted, rightly or wrongly, among populations which enjoy, in varying degrees, that form of government. Praise of democracy therefore readily enters into the domain of platitude, which is itself among the dangers to democracy, especially in lowering its appeal to the young. I mean, of course, the young who grew up within the democratic system. Young people who have grown up under other systems often seem quite attracted to the democratic idea.

For the moment the only point I should like to make about the version of liberty offered by the liberal and democratic State is that, however we choose to view the virtues and vices of that version of liberty, people who live in democratic States know what that version means in practice to them. The equivalent is true of those who live under other different but existing systems of government: the Soviet Union, for example, has its own version of liberty and those who live under that system know from experience how to evaluate that version.

BUT THE SAME IS NOT TRUE of the versions of liberty offered by those who like to call themselves "liberation movements" and who, as they seek to establish their version of liberty by violence and terror, are called by their enemies "terrorists."

"Terrorists" is of course an emotive term, used to describe people seen as making an *unjustifiable* use of violence. Those who are described as terrorists, and who reject that title for themselves, make the uncomfortable point that national armed forces, fully supported by democratic opinion, have in fact employed violence and terror on a far vaster scale than liberation movements have as yet been able to attain. The "freedom fighters" see themselves as fighting a just war. Why should they not be entitled to kill, burn, and destroy as national armies, navies and air forces do, and why should the label "terrorist" be applied to them and not to the national armies, navies and air forces?

Some pacifists—and not only pacifists—have found the argument implicit in these questions exceedingly impressive. Pacifists put the formal argument the other way round: instead of both National Armies and Freedom-fighter/Terrorists having an equal right to kill, both are equally

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wrong to do so. Some pacifists, and some who are not quite pacifists, have pushed this argument to what does in fact appear to be its logical conclusion—that the national security forces, even in a democracy, have no right to repress armed minority groups pursuing political objectives by violent means. The minority groups, it is true, don't have the right to use such means; but both are on the same footing. In practice the view is helpful to the minority groups in question, so that people passionately opposed in principle to violence and people passionately devoted to its practice can sometimes be brought into a strange alliance.

In point of intellectual principle—though not in practice—the Freedom-fighter/Terrorists and those who support the use of force against them by the agents of the democratic state, have more in common than either group has with the pacifist. In practice, as I have indicated, the bond may join pacifist and terrorist; but intellectually there is this much common ground between the two groups which are prepared to use force, to the extent that circumstances are thought to justify its use.

THROUGH THE THEME OF JUSTIFICATION we come back to the question of liberty, the value in the name of which both the force or violence of the Terrorist/Freedom-fighters and the force or violence used by the democratic state in the suppression of the Terrorist/Freedom-fighters can be seen as justified.

The terms "force" and "violence" are again, like "Terrorist" and "Freedom-fighter", largely emotive propaganda terms; which term we use about a given act depends, not on the degree of force or violence involved, but on a view of its justification.

Those who regard the democratic state as justified in using force in defence of liberty may not be able to offer a philosophically satisfactory definition of liberty; but at least they have practical experience of the conditions which they identify as constituting political liberty, for themselves and their fellow-citizens, and which they consider to be of sufficient value to justify the use of force in the defence of something known and held to be precious.

As against this, the concept of liberty offered by the liberation movements lacks an identifiable terrestrial referent. Those who are inclined to identify terror with communism might disagree with this. But it does not appear that most of those groups at present using violence in democratic countries are doing so in order to replace democratic systems by states on the Russian or Chinese models. Were that to be the goal, there would at least be a basis for the assessment of the version of liberty offered by the liberation movement in question. As it is, no such reliable basis of assessment is available—only "programmes" and other forms of propaganda.

The versions of liberty offered by the various Liberator/Terrorists can be roughly divided into two main categories: *millenarian* and *secessionist/irredentist*. The two categories overlap, since the secessionist/irredentist militants present a millenarian picture of the results which they believe would flow from the alienation or recuperation of their territory of predilection.

This local millennium is of course indispensable, as the result supposedly aimed at has not merely to be presented, but also to be felt, as justifying killing, maiming, burning, and other forms of destruction. The mere achievement of some desirable regional adjustment could not be presented or felt as justifying all that; so higher, quasi-mystical versions of a conditional future articulate themselves. Although the two categories do thus appear to overlap, yet a clear distinction can still be made between the true (or universal) millenarians, and those whose intensely limited mystical nationalism uses millenarian language in a particular and local context.

EXAMPLES OF TRUE MILLENARIAN MOVEMENTS include the Weathermen and the Symbionese Liberation Army in the United States and the Baader-Meinhof group in Germany. Examples of ultra-nationalist movements, with millenarian overtones, include the various Arab militant groups which aim at liberating Palestine by destroying Israel, and the various Irish Republican groups, of which the most notable is the Provisional IRA which aims at liberating Northern Ireland against the known wishes of the majority of its inhabitants, and by methods strongly condemned by the great majority both of the population of Northern Ireland and of all Ireland, as well as of the United Kingdom.

There are also cases where a local conflict is felt as having universal significance. The most obvious example is that of the Zionist Terrorist/Liberators whose campaign was felt to have a religious and moral significance for the whole world. But, in a secular way, the American groups see their particular struggles as struggles for or

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against America in the interests of the whole world. And in both secular and religious terms the Provisional IRA are disposed to see their fight as having a world significance, and to think of God as especially concerned with Irish history, and as keeping a particularly attentive and discriminating eye on those "dreary steeples" of Tyrone and Fermanagh which so irritated Winston Churchill and so many others since his time.

The millenarian and particularist forms of Liberation/Terrorism are therefore distinguishable but often interlocking. What exactly are the concepts of liberty for which these two groups are prepared to sacrifice so much, and so many?

IT IS VERY DIFFICULT, indeed probably impossible, to answer this question. In some cases, the movements concerned either acknowledge or scarcely bother to hide the fact that they have no programme at all.

Thus the Italian movement known as the *Autonomi* has been quoted as rejecting discussion of programmatic goals and simply stressing "vitality and action." In this case it is not a question of using terror to achieve some version of liberty in the future. Terror *is* liberty, here and now. It is not altogether surprising that such a doctrine should come to us out of the cradle-land of Fascism.

Yet if other Terrorist/Liberation movements were equally frank I think many of them, and certainly many individual participants in them, would have the same message to convey. With few exceptions, terrorists are not theorists, or interested in theory. The few who wish to articulate general ideas, and are capable of doing so in writing, are often taken by outsiders as speaking for the movement. In fact the business end of the movement—the killers and potential killers—may know little and care less about what these putative spokesmen are saying. Thus the IRA in the 1960s came to be regarded as a Marxist movement, mainly because one highly articulate Marxist intellectual had a considerable influence over the "Chief of Staff." The programme and propaganda of the movement took on a distinctly Marxist tinge.

But in 1969 it became clear that many members —including the most dangerous ones—were not interested in the ideology of their spokesmen. The Provisional IRA, opting for violence in the here and now, was not a new entity; it consisted of people who had been deemed to be spoken for by intellectuals who were not in fact speaking for them. The Provisionals in their turn produced their own programme—a purportedly democratic socialist and federalist document—and their own intellectuals. Of the latter an Irish wit has said that they have minds like unripe gooseberries: "small, bitter, fuzzy and green."

This programme and the public utterances of these intellectuals have probably even less relevance to the realities of the movement than had their equivalents in the IRA of the '60s. At a Republican social gathering a few years back someone referred respectfully to the Provisionals' most prominent political spokesman. "Him?" said a veteran contemptuously. "When did *he* last 'do' a British soldier?"

The veteran was, I believe, more relevant than the propagandist; head-hunting the truth behind the talk of "federalism."

INTELLECTUALS, being by definition interested in words and ideas, are more likely to be misled about the reality of such movements than are ordinary people. Intellectuals are apt to scrutinise the programmes and manifestos of such movements in the hope of learning about their nature, without suspecting that they might perhaps learn as much about that matter from studying a bus-ticket or the entrails of a crow as from such documents.

The man in the street, who is much less interested in the latest manifesto, than in the latest explosion is also much closer to the realities and priorities of the movements themselves. The unreality of stated aims is more obvious in the case of the millenarian-universalist type of movement, than in the territorial secessionist/irredentist type.

The millenarians aim at destroying the existing structure of society, at bringing down "the whole great guilty temple." They assume, or appear to assume, that what would replace a bombed-out capitalism or communism would be a new and ideal form of society. There are no rational grounds for such an assumption, but millenarians are interested in faith, not reason. Because their objective is so fantastic, because it is obviously incapable of being met by any concessions, and because this attempt to achieve the

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impossible by violence puts us *all* at risk, there is relatively little public inclination—though there is some—to try to meet these particular terrorists half way.

IT IS OTHERWISE WITH the territorial terrorists. Their versions of liberty are, or appear to be, attainable, and even relatively modest: the transfer of particular territory, the withdrawal of particular forces. And those who would be inconvenienced by these transactions seem to be limited in number: some Jews here, some Protestants there, perhaps some Catholics too. There are those—not being Jews, or that kind of Protestants or Catholics, or resident in the area scheduled for liberation—who think, not always aloud, that all that might not be too high a price for the cessation of a terror that endangers, for example, all air-line traffic.

It is to those who think along these lines that the terrorist is addressing himself, after his own peculiar fashion.

The most obvious difficulty about concessions to territorial violence is that such concessions are liable to excite counter-violence from other claimants to the disputed territory. The most active territorial terrorists today are Irish and Arab claimants to territories in which the existing local population rejects the violent claimants by large majority. In such cases it appears inevitable that concessions to territorial terror would result in counter-terror on a greater scale, flowing from a larger and more bitterly resented grievance. Even without such concession the mere existence of revolutionary terror is likely to generate the counter-terror of the vigilante, aiming either at maintaining the *status quo*, or restoring some *status quo* of the recent past. But actual concessions to revolutionary terror make the vigilante backlash much harder to contain, and accelerate the cycle of the competing terrors.

And if that massive difficulty were not enough, there is the further difficulty that what looks to the outsider like a limited territorial claim is liable to take on much more cloudy and ominous forms in the minds of the terrorists themselves, and may in fact be quite as unreal and unattainable as the demands of the universalists. There is, as I indicated earlier, a millenarian aspect also to territorial terrorism. This is rather clearly visible in the case of the demands of the IRA.

Many Northern Unionists (and many people in Britain too) think the IRA want Northern Ireland to be handed over to the Dublin Government. But that is not at all what the IRA want, either formally or substantially. For them the Dublin Government is a vassal government of England's, and the Dublin Parliament a vassal Parliament. The fact that that Parliament is democratically elected is irrelevant.

The Republic for which they think of themselves as fighting is not the internationally recognised entity known as the Republic of Ireland. Their Republic—the Republic of the Republicans—is more like Plato's Republic in that it is an ideal, never achieved and never likely to be achieved. It requires total separation from Britain—in Wolfe Tone's often-repeated words—"to break the connection with England, the never failing source of all our political evils. . . ." The connection is most clearly seen in Northern Ireland, which is why that target has priority at present. But, for the IRA, Dublin has not broken the connection either. There is unfinished business there too. The connection must be totally broken, and obviously the existing State preserves and fosters many links with Britain, economic, social, cultural, linguistic and even —through the EEC—political. For the Republican such links represent a disguised form of the old imperialism. The connection has not been broken. As the Social and Economic Programme of Provisional Sinn Fein states: "The nature of the connection goes much deeper than simply the occupation by foreign troops."

Nor is it just the connection with Britain which is intolerable: any connection with a Western Europe which includes Britain has also to be fought. The same document says that "Sinn Fein will resist and oppose Brussels domination just as the Irish people have resisted British domination for centuries." The Irish people does not here mean the actual population of Ireland, as a casual reader might perhaps assume. The actual people of Ireland—*this* generation of that people, in the Republican vocabulary—are not thought of as having the right to say whether the connection has or has not been broken.

The arbiters of whether Wolfe Tone's ideal has been achieved are the faithful few, the pure Republicans, in short the IRA. Their demand is not merely for a limited territorial concession, it is for *Eire Nua:* a New Ireland. The achievement of that New Ireland would, I think, require two rather basic changes for the island of Ireland: a new geographical location and a new population. These may prove difficult either to negotiate or to extort by physical force.

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I HAVE SPOKEN in a little detail of this particular territorial-millenarian demand because it is the one whose consequences most directly concern us, and because it is the one with which I am most familiar. But I believe that other revolutionary territorial-terrorist groups are likely to show a significant number of similar characteristics: an exalted and unrealistic conception of their objective; a contempt for ordinary people and for what such people are prepared to accept as satisfactory or tolerable; and the conception that willingness to use force constitutes the qualification to be the arbiter of the result.

The claim is made that the State of whose Government I was until recently a member—the Republic of Ireland—owes its existence to territorial terrorism, and to negotiation by the British Government of that time with the terrorists. I reject that claim. Basically our State owes its existence to the known and attested demand of a majority of its inhabitants for self-government and to the recognition, in Britain and the world, of the legitimacy of that demand. That demand was repeatedly expressed at the polls; it was also expressed by violent means.

The men with whom Lloyd George negotiated in 1921 were all elected representatives and members of a political party with a large majority in the territory on which the State which emerged from the negotiations was based. That democratic and representative capacity—not the rather meagre armed force behind them—was the real strength of their position. And when they had negotiated their new State—which was identical in territory with that offered by the Liberal Government before the War, and before the use of any Irish violence—they then had to defend it against the pure Republicans and the pure gunmen, indifferent then as now to the democratic concept. Nor is that struggle yet over.

The idea of negotiating with men who have no democratic base, and no democratic mandate or responsibility, whose sole passport to the negotiating table is the gun, is a quite different matter. I am speaking, of course, of conditions in which democratic consultations are regularly and normally available, as in these islands. It seems to me that, in these conditions, democratic governments cannot, without abdication of trust, and a fruitless abdication at that, engage in political negotiations with people whose sole claim to take part in such negotiations is their proven capacity to kill, burn, or destroy, and whose objectives in such negotiations are incapable of fulfilment.

The record of democratic governments themselves, in relation to violence, is far from spotless, but this fact does not negate the progress in civilisation which government responsible to the governed represents, nor does it require or entitle the heirs of democracy to surrender any part of that heritage to an arbitrary power deriving solely from the barrel of a gun. On this view the force used by a democratic state against the terrorist is legitimate while the violence of the terrorist is not legitimate. I am deliberately now using the vocabulary which goes with the concept of legitimacy which I hold, and for which I argue here.

IT MAY SEEM TO SOME that the results of this analysis are so obvious as scarcely to require such elaboration. But in fact the full implications of the existence of this kind of terrorist movement scarcely seem to be recognised. People frequently call for "fresh political initiatives", assuming that some initiatives which would have the effect of ending the violence are available. But what kind of political initiative could disarm people set on the achievement of impossible objectives, objectives not desired by the people whom they baselessly claim to represent, and (in the case of the territorialists) passionately rejected by the majority of those inhabiting the territory whose liberation is their immediate though not their sole aim?

The answer has to be that no political initiatives capable of meeting these requirements exist. These demands are in themselves not negotiable; and the problems created by them are therefore not capable of solution by political means—since the judges of whether such a solution is satisfactory have to be the only people who can voluntarily stop the violence, who are the people who are perpetrating it, and who are the authors of the impossible demands.

This situation is so painful to contemplate that people naturally have a tendency to avoid seeing it clearly. Mistaken analogies are eagerly clutched at. The fact that the same names—Sinn Fein and IRA—which belonged to those by whom the Anglo-Irish treaty of 1921 was negotiated are also used by the contemporary terrorists and their friends is one source of confusion. If a Government could negotiate with the Sinn Fein/IRA of those days why should not a Government of today negotiate with the Sinn

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Fein/IRA of today? After all, if today's IRA have used violence, so did the IRA of 1921.

IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT some British political leaders must have had some such thoughts in mind when they agreed to meet Provisional leaders in 1972 and 1973. But the analogy here, superficially so tempting—and so useful not only to Irish but to *all* revolutionary terrorists—is profoundly and perilously misleading.

The vital difference between the old Sinn Fein/IRA movement and the new is not in point of the admissability of violence in principle, nor yet in point of the character of the violence used (though there are major differences there), but quite simply in the representative authority of the old Sinn Fein, and the lack of all representative capacity in the modern Sinn Fein—or more than the lack, the specific repudiation of that movement by the very people whom it claims, in some mystical sense, to represent.

The old Sinn Fein had a real claim to be a liberation movement, because it was really chosen to represent a majority of those whom it claimed to be liberating. True it did not have a mandate for violence, nor had the elected representatives control over the violence actually used. But they had, and they retained, a genuine popular base. Modern Sinn Fein/IRA has no such base. The importance of the distinction in terms of political morality is obvious. But there is also a vital, and somewhat less obvious, distinction in terms of practical politics, of negotiation and of "delivering" what has been negotiated. The Sinn Fein negotiators of 1921 could accept something significantly less than what Sinn Fein had promised to get. They could accept that, not only because they knew that what Sinn Fein had promised was not obtainable, but because they knew that most of the people whom they represented were heartily sick of all the bloodshed, and would gladly settle for something significantly less than what they had so blithely voted for in 1918. Thus the negotiators had a determinant counter-weight against the absolutely predictable violent repudiation of the Treaty settlement by a section of those who had fought, as they believed, for the full Sinn Fein programme. There was a bloody but short open struggle; the negotiators and their supporters won; they governed the new State until they were replaced by democratic process ten years later.

No negotiations with present-day Sinn Fein/IRA or any similar organisation could conceivably lead to any equivalent, or otherwise desirable outcome. For these men have no constituency, other than doctrinaire fanatical gunmen like themselves. If negotiators on behalf of such a constituency were to agree to something less than the impossible objective for which they all claim to be fighting, those negotiations would have no democratic countervailing force against the inevitable and savage backlash from among their own followers. And what on earth, in any case, is there to negotiate *with*?

The Provisionals for their part have nothing to offer except the cessation of violence. The violence is also their sole claim to political attention. What political object can they gain that can compensate them for voluntarily relinquishing their sole claim to attention, and for disappearing into political obscurity? Short of the millennium, it is hard to imagine any political object which can compensate for political suicide. The notion—prevalent both among some Unionists and some others—that they might be persuaded to take this course (in exchange for political concessions to elected representatives of the population on whose behalf they claim to act) is wholly illusory. They repudiate those representatives as firmly as those representatives repudiate them.

There is, in fact, no political end that such a group can gain from negotiating with a democratic government, *except the prestige of being seen at the negotiation table.* And since there is no available successful outcome for the negotiations they must break down; and there is no way of reopening them except by renewal of the violence which brought them about in the first place. And the fact that the negotiations have occurred raises the hopes of the terrorists, confirms them in their belief in the efficacy of their chosen methods, and encourages them to increase their intensity.

It seems to follow that the quest for a political solution to the problem of political terrorism in a democracy is not only hopeless but actually leads in the opposite direction to that intended, by increasing rather than diminishing the violence.

I AM NOT SAYING that political initiatives and political developments are not desirable in the areas where terrorists are active. They may be, and they may—they will, if they are well chosen—have a *long-term* beneficial effect in relation to terror, by helping to isolate and dis-

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courage its practitioners. But it would be over-optimistic to assume that any political initiative will "solve" terrorism; and it is particularly unwise to advertise some favoured development as being about to have that effect. For that leaves to the terrorist the power to falsify that prediction; and he also has the incentive to do so, since the favoured development will necessarily fall short of the terrorist's impossible full demands.

If there is no political solution, at least in the usual sense of that term, neither is there any purely military solution. It is understandable that some people should dream of ending the cycle of terror by a series of spectacular shoot-outs on the lines favoured by certain American big-city police-chiefs. But these methods, through their effects on neighbours and bystanders, add to and diversify the terror, rather than ending it.

There is in fact no certain way of ending it but there are more and less hopeful ways of seeking to end it. The more hopeful ways include: convincing the terrorist that he is not going to get his own way (that involves refusal to talk with him, since though he can argue fluently from his own peculiar premises, he is not accessible to rational argument, based on premises other than his own); depriving him as far as possible of the publicity he so avidly seeks (that also involves refusal to talk with him); refusal to be impressed, confused or diverted by the versatility of his propaganda campaigns; unremitting, but not unrestrained or indiscriminate, pressure by the security forces; support for those forces from the public.

Clearly not all these ways are fully within the control of democratic governments. Most of them involve the cooperation of the public and of the media; and there are problems about that. Some of them are specific problems confined to particular countries or areas. But those I should like to consider briefly here are those which generally affect reactions of democratic publics to terrorist conspiracies, in ways which help the conspiracies and weaken democracy.

ONE MAJOR FACTOR is the sense of guilt which many educated middle-class people feel about the privileges they possess, and which of course they don't want to give up.

The democratic system has done much to mitigate the effects of inequality, but shows no signs of abolishing inequality itself. So one way of distancing oneself from one's own privileges, without abdicating any of them, is to detach oneself internally from the democratic system, to pride oneself on seeing through its shams—though seeing through them to what it would be hard to say. Thus, when the terrorist strikes, he is seen as in some way striking against these shams, which are seen as upheld by "*institutionalised violence*"—a very useful term from the terrorist's point of view.

Those who use that term seldom pause to consider that it may be much better to institutionalise violence, within a democratic system, than to allow it to shape institutions of its own, which it entirely dominates—as in the case of the private armies. But those who use the term thereby equip themselves with a justification for neutrality as between the democratic state and its armed enemies. And professional considerations often also seem to favour such neutrality. Thus in a recent book on the Herrema kidnapping, the author (a journalist) appeared to pride himself on "neither flattering nor condemning either side." The two sides between whom the balance was thus held even were the armed kidnappers and the police who were trying to rescue the kidnapped man. A certain number of journalists, academics, clergymen, and others seem to have a somewhat similar concept of professional detachment.

Some, without actually supporting the terrorists, go a little beyond "neutrality", in that they sentimentalise the terrorist, seeing him as a "dedicated" person, a "misguided idealist." The importance of this tendency, to which clergymen appear particularly prone, is that it encourages the illusion that the problem may be solved by meeting with the terrorist leaders, reasoning with them, mediating between them and the government, and so on. And all this, with the publicity which accompanies it, is the very stuff on which the terrorist feeds.

The "misguided idealist" notion rests on the fallacy-ridden assumption that, since the terrorist voluntarily runs risks, he must be morally superior to the rest of us, who run no more risks than we have to. This ignores the rather obvious fact that the power which grows out of the barrel of a gun and the kind of glamour which surrounds that power are so attractive in themselves to some people that they outweigh the risks involved. The terrorist leaders are people of that stamp. Their fanatical devotion to their cause, or "ideal", provides them with a

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sense of righteousness in pursuing the course of action which they find most gratifying. This is a sustaining combination.

I HAVE SPOKEN OF a kind of guilt, a kind of neutrality, and a kind of sentimentality, as among the tendencies in democratic society which encourage the terrorist as he fights against that society. These tendencies of course overlap, and all of them can sometimes be found together within the confines of one newspaper article, speech, lecture, or sermon.

They are often accompanied by an attitude of mind which might be identified as unilateral liberalism. This is the kind of liberalism which is sensitive exclusively to threats to liberty seen as emanating from the democratic state itself, and is curiously phlegmatic about threats to liberty from the enemies of that state.

Liberals of this sort appear to be blind to the plight of those who live in fear and under oppression, not because of some abuse of state power, but because that power does not effectively extend to their district of town or country, and because therefore much of their lives is spent under the armed and arbitrary rule of terrorists, or of so-called counter-terrorist vigilantes. Too many people in Northern Ireland today have to live under such primitive jurisdictions, or worse still in the no-man's-lands between them. To those who have to live under such forms of disseminated despotism, the complaints of the unilateral liberals about erosion of liberty by the State must seem strangely irrelevant to what has actually happened to *their* liberty, unmourned by those who defend liberty on one side only.

THE TENDENCIES I have mentioned are part of our democratic society, fruits of its history. They do make life easier for the terrorist, and they are consciously and eagerly exploited by his propagandists. They may also, it is true, provide a safety factor, by preventing the democratic State from over-reacting, thereby moving towards its own destruction. That claim can be made, and supported with examples from the past, not only by unilateral liberals but by liberals who are more generously endowed, geometrically speaking. There are also, however, dangers in *under*-reaction, whether against revolutionary terrorists or vigilante terrorists, as the history of the Weimar Republic reminds us.

If the tendencies I have mentioned had been less strong, terrorist movements would, I think, be less protracted, because less sustained. In part, the disease carries its own remedy. The protraction and extension of terrorism weaken the tendencies that have favoured that protraction and that extension. When the booby-trapped car goes off in your own street you are that much the less inclined to dwell on the idealism of those who put it there.

THE DEMOCRATIC VERSION of liberty is imperfect but known. The terrorist versions combine the perfections of fantasy with the reality of arbitrary power over whatever can be covered by the barrel of that gun. However long it takes, the democratic struggle against the underground terrorist empires, whatever slogans they may use, is a struggle for real liberty for real people, and I think the people understand that rather better than some of those who seek to advise and instruct them.

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Roy Fuller

Taxpayers, the Arts and Big Balloonz

The Reasons for a Resignation

IN FEBRUARY THIS YEAR I resigned from the Arts Council of Great Britain after serving just over a year of the three years for which I had been initially appointed. I had been feeling fed up with the Council for some months and had told the then Chairman, Lord Gibson, of my thoughts of resignation. He said he hoped I wouldn't resign, adding (not entirely jocularly) particularly not before his own term of office came to an end on 30 April 1977, wanting to avoid any more kerfuffles during the last months of his chairmanship. However, after a meeting of the Council on 23 February (not chaired by Lord Gibson, who was in hospital) I felt I could not go on, even till the end of April. I think now I was wrong not to wait until Lord Gibson had gone, especially as I sprung the thing on him in his early convalescence, but the action shows how much matters had got my goat.

In my resignation letter to the Minister for the Arts (Lord Donaldson) I said that I disagreed with so many of the Council's decisions I could not continue to be associated with its activities. It was my intention, if questioned by the Press, merely to put it that when a member of any body cannot accept corporate responsibility he ought to leave it. I did not propose to go into detail, partly because I did not relish possibly misreported argy-bargy about the Council's work, partly because I too wanted Lord Gibson (whose personality and sharp chairmanship I admired) to depart in peace. However, at his request I put down, quite briefly, some specific resignation reasons which I would disclose if really pestered by the media. That would give him a chance of preparing his answers or comments. In the event I think only three newspapers followed up the story (such as it was). The *Daily Telegraph* associated the resignation with "such controversial displays as the Genesis P. Orridge show, featuring prostitution and sadism" but otherwise its report was strictly factual, as was that of *The Times*. The *Evening Standard* also mentioned the show at the Institute of Contemporary Arts (which that paper, too, had been gunning for).

The "specific resignation reasons" will be subsumed in what follows: I always made it clear to those concerned that I might eventually write about my experience of the Council's work when any storm in the teacup had died down. This is that writing, educed at ENCOUNTER's invitation. I shall also want to say something of public patronage of the arts generally. I am conscious that already I have overdone the "I" side of the matter, but I still need to continue a while longer on that tack.

TO GET ME ON THE COUNCIL at the age of 63 may be thought to be an example of catching old birds with chaff (and, incidentally, no money in the way of fees goes to members of the Council nor—and this is more serious—to its Chairman). I had been on the Board of the Poetry Book Society for many years and before then on the Council's Poetry Panel (as it was in those dim dead days almost beyond recall). During all that time I had received the Council's Annual Report and Accounts, which gives details of its benefactions and beneficiaries. Why did I not realise that once a member of the Council I should be upset at a good deal of the expenditure to which it was committed in these latter days? Did I imagine my

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ROY SHAW, *Secretary-General of the Arts Council of Great Britain, will reply to this article in the November* ENCOUNTER.

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presence would somehow change or sanctify Arts Council doings?

Perhaps some readers, whether they would approve or not, do not realise the nature and extent of the Council's subsidies. From the Report and Accounts for 1975–76 (the document for the ensuing year is due to be published about this time, but will show no essential changes in the nature and proportions of the expenditure) I select the following names and figures.

"Performance art" £59,653. Most of the benefactions here are of small sums (£300 to Amazing Professor Crump, £800 to Handbag, £744 to Forkbeard Fantasy, and so forth) but more substantial amounts also appear such as £10,138 to John Bull Puncture Repair Kit and £5,000 to Phantom Captain.

The grants to Regional Arts Associations total over £2,000,000.

The total figure for "Arts Centres and Community Projects" is £581,362. Most of this money goes to ambitious affairs like the I.C.A. and the Round House but nearly £100,000 is taken by such as Harry's Big Balloonz (£2,865).

No doubt during the years one's eyes had glided over such names and activities, never envisaging a situation where responsibility for them would have to be assumed. Besides, I think my recruitment to the Council had been primarily to obtain a chairman for the Literature Panel, to follow Stuart Hampshire on the expiry of his term of office. In this latter area I certainly thought I might be able to encourage things that needed doing and discourage things that ought not to be done.

I SHOULD ADD A WORD here about the somewhat Byzantine way the Council works.

The Council is the decisive body but it is advised by a number of "panels", which meet under the chairmanship of a Council member. From the panels (each of which may have 20 or 30 members) are drawn the various finance committees—Drama Finance Committee, Music Finance Committee, *etc.*, chaired by the appropriate panel chairman—but by some sleight of identity these are deemed to be committees of the Council. So that an application from the poets Buggins and Juggins for cash to visit Reykjavik for their work in progress, *New Letters from Iceland*, would be considered by the Literature Finance Committee, their decision eventually going before the Council (somewhat buried in a mass of bumf), which theoretically could reverse or amend it. The decision would also be reported to the Literature Panel—which might have comments to make but in the last analysis would have no power over it (though the fact that such applications were to be considered at all might well stem from prior policy deliberations of the Panel).

I SHOULD ALSO SAY something at this point about the Council meeting on 23 April after which I decided to resign forthwith. I do so hesitantly, for it is difficult to recover even after so recent an event details of facts and feelings—certainly without notes made at the time. I shall therefore be as short as I can.

Before I came on the Council it had authorised the spending of money on so-called "community arts" for an experimental period of two years. In the first year £176,000 was granted; in the second year £350,000. The questions before the meeting were whether the bounty should continue and if so how much should be spent. The Council had set up a "Community Arts Evaluation Working Group" whose lengthy report had previously been circulated.

What are "community arts"? The Council's previous Working Party (of 1974), whose favourable report had led to the Council's involvement, had avoided a definition but referred to a number of features, one describing the role of "community artists":

> by assisting those with whom they make contact to become more aware of their situation and of their own creative powers. . . . They seek to bring about this increased awareness and creativity by involving the community in the activities they promote.

The latest report took over pretty well lock, stock and barrel (I think I am right in saying) the philosophy of community artists and their supporters. It could not effectively be summarised but I must give some indication of its views, style and flavour, so a series of extracts follows. I should say that the Working Group of eight people included two members of the Council, Jeremy Hutchinson and Laurence Harbottle, a successful and intelligent London solicitor. Also a member was Professor Lawrence Gowing.

> 1. We have come to recognise that successful community arts projects have a special quality. They have something of their own to offer to the arts, something which might well change our appreciation of what art is. . . . Community arts, we believe, are fundamentally concerned with the relationship between art and people.
>
> 2. Although the activity is arts-based, we think it is essential to recognise the totality of the pro-

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> ject's objective. . . . An essential aim of community arts is the breaking down of some of the current barriers of official classification (between the individual arts, between "professional" and "amateur", and between the arts, education, social development *etc.*) in order to fuse the various elements within the community.
>
> 3. Community artists . . . might consider that centres like Morley College perpetuate a traditional view of the arts and therefore are in danger of becoming prisoners of their own "exclusivity".
>
> 4. We are satisfied that any sum [for continuation of the Community Arts subsidy] less than £550,000 will mean a collapse of a substantial number of successful enterprises.

I think I have quoted enough to show why I felt I could not be associated with the decision to continue this project and at the suggested level of support. The blurring of art, education and social work; the difficulty of assessing the quality of "community arts" (indeed, quality was something not taken much account of by the report); the increasing bureaucracy (an additional officer for community arts at the Arts Council was proposed, plus a grant to the Association of Community Artists); the trendy gobbledegook in which a good deal of the report was written; the sense that the Council was being taken for a ride by at best modestly talented individuals and at worst exhibitionists or those primarily politically motivated—these things roused my spleen. Also, whatever one thought of the artistic worth of Harry's Big Balloonz (invidiously to mention this enterprise once more) support of such things, if to be supported at all, ought not to come from central funds for the arts. Moreover, it irked me that the sum proposed exceeded the entire proposed allocation for the support of literature.

Of course, I recognise that a better case could be made for community arts than the foregoing narration. But I believe even those in favour would have to admit the indifference (in fact, sometimes hostility) of the "community" to many of the "arts" presented to them by the movement, and also the laboriousness of monitoring the use of public money for activities not infrequently bordering on show-biz, the amateur, the ludicrous. As to the latter point, I daresay it would be fairly generally held in the community arts world that in such activities there were no standards of excellence, no good or bad, and that what went on was determined by the level of experience of the people involved (as was approximately maintained by a spokesman for the movement in the TV programme *Arena* on 11 February 1976). I should also say here that in this field, as in the specific area of drama, one had become aware of complaints that propaganda for the Left had in the case of some subsidised groups replaced artistic aims. Though it is no use being naive on this question (for such groups would presumably regard propaganda as synonymous with artistic aspirations) I think the application of standards of excellence would thin out support which I should regard as outside the scope of an "Arts" Council in an open society.

There was another matter at the meeting on the 23 April that got on my wick. Associated with an exhibition of paintings, for which the Council was responsible, was a catalogue containing a page of obscenity. This had been withdrawn after a more or less spot decision by the Council officer concerned, on the ground that it would offend the public attending the exhibition. This sensible editorial action gave rise, at the Council meeting, to an interminable and farcical discussion about censorship and the like, and I rather think, in the end, it was decided to send an apology to the exhibitors. (Certainly there is an apology on behalf of the Council in the Report for 1976–77.)

BUT I WOULD NOT WANT to make too much of these two matters in terms of my resignation. There had been a good few previous disagreements of equal or greater concern to me and it is time I mentioned them. It will be convenient and fair if I do so in the categories I gave to Lord Gibson when he invited me to amplify my reasons for resigning.

1. THE BESTOWAL OF MONEY for the arts inevitably attracts the idle, the dotty, the minimally talented, the self-promoters. In my opinion too much public money gets into the hands of such people. I want to confine my remarks to the literature side of the Council's work but I have no doubt that the process goes on in the other subsidised arts.

With all due respect to the officers of the Council (and in the literature and finance departments, where my experience lay, I found the officers efficient and devoted), the very setting up of an organisation produces loyalties and some species at least of empire-building. It would be self-denying indeed if a departmental director tried to dissuade his Finance Committee from spending its allocation. In fact, because of historical circumstances, the whole ethos of the Council (and its officers) has been to try to obtain from Government ever-increasing annual grants,

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a process morbidly accentuated by inflation. So there has been a built-in snowballing effect. The crudest side of the process is that organisations and individuals taken on as clients by the various Finance Committees are found difficult to drop, while other applicants constantly arrive and are thought worthy.

In literature I found a few beneficiaries I christened "Arts Council pensioners." To make a living out of writing one must be popular or extremely industrious (qualities not mutually exclusive, of course). Some writers in neither category are helped to lead the literary life through Arts Council money. It was my hope to stop this practice: to insist that a grant to a writer was tied to a specific project of research or creation—to pay expenses of travel or to buy time off from some non-literary employment. I do not know that I should have ever been wholly successful in this, for there was a school of thought (represented on the Literature Finance Committee) of the "*Give 'im the money, Barney*" variety, that any not too prosperous or preposterous a writer ought to have a grant if he troubled to apply and the literature allocation had not been exhausted. I must say some such grants (perhaps of £2,000 or £3,000) stuck in my gullet. I mean, even those of us not on the bread-line would not sneer at a tax-free windfall to buy a new car or have the house painted.

As to the self-promoting side of the business, I think it was Ronald Harwood (an excellent member of the Literature Finance Committee) who coined the term "Egoist Press" for the publisher or magazine editor who sooner or later included his own work in his Council-subsidised publication. Such is the rule rather than the exception. For instance, a leaflet inserted in the subsidised magazine *Fireweed* gave a biographical and bibliographical run-down on the two editors, ending with the information that they could be booked for a two-hours reading from their own work through the National Poetry Secretariat which (itself subsidised by the Council) would subsidise their fees and expenses.

I think the subsidisation of the purely dotty has been more in evidence in arts other than literature.

2. THE INERTIA OF SUBSIDY leads sometimes to a plain misuse of public money. When the Poetry Society was a fuddy-duddy and decaying organisation housed in decaying premises, I believe the Literature Panel (with a grander title and a new-found amplitude of money and freedom compared with the old poetry panel) conceived it to be an excellent object to revivify with cash. The result has been successive struggles for power within the Society, in the recent past mainly by people I would class as "maniacs." The subsidy to the Society is currently of the order of £50,000 a year and of course it is the benefits from this sum that are being quarrelled over. (I should in fairness add that there are recent signs that in the "Moderates" *v.* "Maniacs" contest, the former have got on top.)

In 1975–76 the Institute of Contemporary Arts received a subsidy of over £130,000. On the occasions I have entered the premises in the Mall the impression received has been one of squalor and ugliness (though someone suggested to me that that was what many customers liked) and some of the exhibitions and entertainments seem to have been pornographic or obscene. Certainly the premises are too expensive and on the whole unsuitable.

These are two notorious examples. Less spectacular expenditures can also be worrying. There is a little poetry magazine called *Meridian*. It lacks editorial thrust and its purpose seems to be merely to print the work of unknown poets beside that of known poets. It would be harmless were it run as some amateur editor's hobby and out of his pocket. As it is, because of an annual Council grant contributors are paid, and a demand for the subsidy to cease would be met by what I think is a common view expressed at 105 Piccadilly that the set-up is at least a way of getting money to poets.

3. DURING MY MEMBERSHIP one of my jokes (like most of my jokes, repeated a good deal too often, I daresay) was that to have both Richard Hoggart and Raymond Williams on the Council indicated rather more than bad luck. Also, of course, Jeremy Hutchinson had been Hoggart's feed in the *Lady Chatterley* trial. But I think it would be going too far to say that there had been overwhelmingly too many political appointments to the Council. Members of a more sceptical cast of mind in the areas of radicalism and the arts were usually neither roused enough nor sufficiently mentally organised to speak out. (It may be argued that to accept appointment to the Council is *ipso facto* indicative of a leniency towards the matters to which I have been objecting, but I believe this is taking too pessimistic a view of the reservoir of people who might be secured for

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membership.) I have already mentioned community arts and will come later to regionalisation: these are both spheres in which the Council in the main regarded itself as little more than a conduit pipe for public money, having accepted the activities in question as Good Things.

Radical do-goodery would be too undescriptive a term for the attitudes I am trying to indicate—which partook more of the belief in natural human aspiration and honesty, and the civilised progressiveness of left-wing organisations, rather as if life were being lived in the immediate post-War ideological euphoria. In my experience the Council was all too ready to accept lingering illusions. Two examples in my time were a report by Lord Redcliffe-Maud to the Gulbenkian Foundation, *Support for the Arts in England and Wales* ("Redcliffe-Maud") and *The Arts Britain Ignores*, a report by Naseem Khan sponsored by the Council, Gulbenkian and the then Community Relations Commission ("Naseem Khan").

Redcliffe-Maud came into being mainly to look at Regional Arts Associations, bodies set up to conduct and supervise arts activities with money derived from the Council and from Local Authorities. It would need the dimensions of a pamphlet to deliver an adequate critique of Redcliffe-Maud. Its illusions, too, seem to belong to War-time or immediately post-War days, when projected extension of education presupposed a general literacy and desire for cultural opportunity. Philistinism, indolence, the ubiquity of pop music (and the indulgence towards it by intellectuals), hatred of the cultural past, to say nothing of complete indifference—such present realities are not, it seems to me, really taken on board by Redcliffe-Maud. So that the Report's "Conclusions and Objections" must be bothersome to those who think that at present civilised values and standards are greatly menaced. Thus Redcliffe-Maud, for example, wants the arts brought nearer "the heart of the curriculum" in schools and teacher-training institutions; looks to local authorities to become "the chief art patrons of the long-term future"; and accepts the notion of devolution of decision-making in the patronage of the arts to Regional Arts Associations (except for those decisions which can be shown to require consideration by a national body—presumably those concerning prestige companies like Covent Garden). I came to feel that it was hopeless to argue that Redcliffe-Maud's euphoria was unjustified, that it paid far too little account to the maintenance of standards and values, that devolution to the extent proposed would dilute the excellence of the arts and lead to a growth of arts bureaucrats—that, indeed, it seemed in one's gloomier moments to be just another impulsion to make even more of the British people innumerate messers-about with clay and guitars and unrhythmic verse.

Naseem Khan, again, dealt with a subject demanding space and expertise I do not possess. Its general conclusion may be fairly said to be to recommend more public money for the arts brought from their native cultures by ethnic groups now living in this country, so that those arts may be preserved and even extended here. The term "arts" is liberally interpreted. I feel myself that the encouragement of ethnic minority arts on the scale envisaged by Naseem Khan is socially divisive, likely to be politically slanted, and in the last analysis pointless, for the conditions which led to the rise of those arts are not and will not ever (one hopes!) be present in Britain. But here, too, I felt views of this kind would never prevail round the Council table.

4. "Maintenance of standards and values." I believe that public money for the arts cannot be properly dispensed without a strong regard in the dispensing body for standards of excellence and principles of value. Of course, put in this way the proposition would probably not be denied except by extremists (though tentacles of the rot occasionally touched Redcliffe-Maud: "neither in painting nor music have we reached agreement, even among serious critics, on standards of judgement by which the genius can readily be distinguished from the phoney"). And Lord Gibson and (as will be seen later) the Secretary-General were concerned with the quality and nature of what came out of the machine after the money had been put in the slot. Yet again, round the Council table one found almost a morbid fear of so-called "censorship", of discipline, of judgment; and a belief in the sacred principle that "freedom" is good for artists, as such minds often suppose it is for children. Of course, mistaken patronage cannot always be avoided but to continue it when the work produced or displayed is offensive by reason of its quality or taste seems wrong. This function of judgment—of representing the public interest—which may finally be a quasi-editorial function since without the subsidy the magazine may disappear or the picture fail to be exhibited—cannot be shirked; and I believe that public confidence in the arts would be

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strengthened if the function were exercised more frequently and more firmly. Out of quite a few that disturbed me during my time of office I will give one tiny example. The literary magazine *Ambit*, subsidised by the Council (£3,000 in 1975–76), has been, in my view of things, often pornographic, occasionally obscene. I could not see that its virtues outweighed what was likely to be highly offensive, in a non-artistic, non-literary way, to a substantial proportion of the public who paid for it.

Under this heading I have concentrated on the "scandalous" because that has caused most argument, but naturally enough I would regard as much more important the question of subsidising the feeble and the pretentious in the arts. Underlying most of what I have said is the belief that this is not impossible to detect in advance (or *ex post facto*!) and that the bodies dispensing arts money are too indulgent.

I HAVE SAID NOTHING of the national companies—Covent Garden, the English National Opera, the National Theatre, the Royal Shakespeare Company—that take so much of the Arts Council's grant in aid. During my relatively brief period of office there was no opportunity of getting to grips with them—even if that is ever a possibility for the Council. There may be a case for taking them out of the Council's sphere: they are all run by quasi-public boards that could receive public money direct and assume (if they have not already got it) public responsibility. The companies are so much connected with national prestige and tourism that it could be argued that there was no danger, artistic or financial, in the buffer of the Council being removed. But I would not favour this myself. There are things wrong with the national companies and undoubtedly other things will go wrong in the future. What chance of putting them right except through the Council, improbable though any effective action might be at present? (However, the course of the more extreme forms of megalomania might be halted by chance, as it were—a combination of inflation, strikes, and the Government's determination to apply a virtual financial standstill.)

Both Lord Gibson and the present Secretary-General believe that Council officers should have a greater role in spending money on the arts and assessing the results, leading the Council itself in more of an advisory capacity. There is a great deal to commend this notion. For all the boobs made, the BBC's tradition of referral upwards in cases of doubt and built-in duty to the public might be a model for more delegation from Council to officers, though of course the analogy between the two organisations is far from exact. But the guide-lines published for internal use by the BBC—in various programme areas—are the kind of thing that might usefully evolve in an Arts Council with greater officer power. Whether the Council at this point in history could easily develop a satisfactory tradition one may doubt, however.

Contemplating the destiny of some of the money doled out by the Council, it more than once struck me that perhaps it would be no bad thing if public patronage of the arts was abolished. No doubt as this heresy occurred to me at 105 Piccadilly, within my vision would be some of the hideous contemporary paintings purchased by the Council itself. But in the field of literature three serious writers have in fact recently expressed doubts as to benefits gained. John Heath-Stubbs, in *New Poetry 34*, wanted to see grants to individual writers done away with (leaving cases of financial difficulty to be dealt with by the Royal Literary Fund). Philip Larkin, in the address he gave in Hamburg when receiving the 1976 Shakespeare Prize, was sceptical about the effect on poetry of the system that encouraged and paid poets to read poems in public (and develop a public persona) and "to move into the education world" as visiting reader or lecturer or "fellow in creative writing." Ian Robinson in the *Times Higher Educational Supplement* (12 March 1976) came to the conclusion that

> if literature is to survive, if works of literature are to be freely created, published and judged, there is no alternative to making "the system" work. The best thing the Arts Council can do for it is to leave it alone.

I wouldn't myself take the extreme *laissez-faire* position of the last-named, though I do not underestimate the evils of feather-bedding. During my time I was glad the practice grew of Council guarantees to publishers against loss in the case of worthy but patently unprofitable books. Towards the end, though, some impudent applications were received—impudent as to the proportion of overheads charged against the particular book, impudent as to the lack of enterprise in not taking the chance that a book will in fact break even or that an author's future work will redeem his current unprofitability.

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IT IS ONLY RIGHT to say that when I joined the Council the Secretary-General, Roy Shaw, was almost as new as I was; perhaps reluctant to throw his weight about. He has been kind enough to let me see a draft of his Report for 1976–77 (to be published immediately before this article) which speaks quite sharply in a few of the areas I have been trying to cover. It contains a strong affirmation of some "élitist" (crass concept, still fashionable) positions, particularly the desirability of assessing the value of community arts without making indulgent allowances for the areas served and the artists and audiences involved. Indeed, underlying a lot of what he says is the principle that the Council must constantly look to artistic standards. It would be churlish not to acknowledge that his influence may still have its effect to make.

Yet he never really comes to grips with the more-means-worse principle in the arts (why should he?). Yes, one can agree with him that often the general public is underestimated in what it can "take" in the arts (music, in the form of concerts and recordings, is an example of progress made since, say, the '30s). But can it take—should it take—what I would think of as rubbish, either pretentious or simplistic? Is "arts education" rather than general education really the way to increase interest in the arts? Should the Secretary-General of the Arts Council tell the public to "keep away from contemporary arts" if they don't want to be shocked or disturbed? (A poor view would be taken of a Director General of the BBC who in defence suggested the use of the OFF switch.) And though I would agree with him that it would be impossible to "pre-censor" (a word that somewhat predetermines the issue) country-wide arts activities, surely some things can and should be nipped in the bud before damage is done. He cites (as what radical do-gooder has not?) *Jude the Obscure* as a work that in its time aroused the lust for censorship, but how can it be cited in any meaningful way beside some spectacles in the contemporary theatre?

AFTER MY RESIGNATION became known how ruefully I regarded some of the allies gained! (And how appreciative I was of letters of regret received from friends made through service on the Council.) Yet who can blame those who get choleric over public money spent on vanity publications, on a magazine that runs "erotica contests" (*Transatlantic Review*), on the variety of exhibitionists in the field of so-called drama, on the training of "arts administrators" to service expanding empires of artists and who in turn will expand their admin empires?

It can only do good if those responsible for public support of the arts recognise the limitations of merely spreading money around. A multitude of fellows clowning about in evening dress and top-hats (garb beloved of exhibitionists) or painting unskilfully in patterns, not much appreciated by the public paying them—this sort of thing is depressing, but even more depressing is the probability that if tomorrow there started up a magazine of the calibre of *New Verse* or *Scrutiny* it would get no more subscribers than those magazines had in the '30s. And this in times of greater general prosperity and despite a good few years of quite generous public patronage.

It is because of this (and for other good reasons) that one's blood runs cold at the suggestion of Hugh Jenkins, former Minister for the Arts, of a mainly elected and representational Arts Council. Endless debates in Council, even less chance of lopping off beneficiaries, an even greater disagreement about standards and values—surely those would be some of the results. Such a body would find it almost impossible to develop the friendly and intimate *esprit de corps* to enable it to safeguard the public interest without compromising on artistic principles.

Gloom has suffused almost all I have said here but of course that was my brief. There is in fact one overriding cause for hope. Quite a lot of public money is now available for the arts and any government would find it politically difficult to cut it. There is no reason, for instance, why we shouldn't have the best symphony orchestras in the world; or a series of compact and elegant volumes of English literature like the French *Pléiade* editions; or a theatre that with modest seriousness systematically played classic English drama.

One might add that so far as contemporary work is concerned as much can be done for it beyond the Council's scope as within it—by putting Public Lending Right through, for example, or giving more money for books to libraries, schools and universities.

No doubt such examples are excessively safe, but I see no harm in conservatism in an era when the *avant garde* often regards art's past as a morgue and art's technique as hampering creativity.

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Column

IT IS BY NOW clear that, whether we like it or not, psychohistory is with us to stay, even though it has not as yet made the same headway in this country as it has in the United States. Perhaps this is because our historians are too conservative or our psychiatrists are overmodest. In the United States, however, neither suffer from such inhibitions, and the time has come when any public figure, whether in the past or the present, may find himself a subject for the psychohistorian or the psychobiographer.

As an interesting article in *Newsweek* reports,

> "An American President may never see a psychiatrist—or even tape his private conversations—yet chances are that some stranger will eventually write a 'psychobiography' on him, explaining his quest for public office in terms usually reserved for the analyst's couch. In the past four years alone, various 'psychohistorians' have published lengthy books exploring the Kennedy family's 'neuroses', the dreams of LBJ, Henry Kissinger's lust for power and—in three separate, savage psychobiographies—Richard Nixon's tormented psychosexual development. Already in the works are at least two psychobiographies of Jimmy Carter, which the President will be able to read for himself long before his current term of office expires. . . ."

I must confess that I have a certain admiration for the ruthlessness with which Americans are prepared to manhandle their most eminent public figures; and mere vulgar curiosity makes me almost, if not quite, wish that we in this country were more willing to imitate them in this respect. I should like to know a little about Mr Heath's dreams, or the "neurosis" behind the Callaghan-Jay dynasty, or Sir Harold Wilson's "tormented psychosexual development"; and certainly such knowledge might do something to enliven our at present somewhat drab political scene. Perhaps one day even The Throne itself may be transformed into a psycho historian's couch (though not, we hope, in Jubilee Year). At least, if we are to take the United States as our model, we must be prepared for such developments, and public (even Royal) figures must not shrink from the psychobiographer's probing scalpel.

In the United States, *Newsweek* tells us, the belief that orthodox historical methods are not sufficient to explain such events as the first World War, or Hitler's rise to power, or the war in Viet Nam, in which irrational forces appear to have taken over from any conscious motivation, has by today gone so far that psychohistory has become a recognised field of study at over two hundred American universities. In 1972 the American Historical Association formally conferred academic respectability on the subject by accepting into membership the Group for the Use of Psychology in History, consisting of some 400 practitioners of psychohistory.

The swift development, however, of this branch of learning, or pseudo-learning, has also been accompanied by a keener awareness of its dangers and inadequacies, both among those who practise it, and among their potential victims. A White House spokesman has responded somewhat sharply to the suggestion, in a forthcoming psychobiography of the President, that the clue to his political career is to be found in childhood conflicts; and asserted categorically that he "knows far more about the President's father and mother than any psychiatrist ever will. . . ."

BUT IT IS NOT ONLY potential victims who have begun to become alarmed; the psychohistorians themselves are becoming embroiled in the toils of their own subject. Thus, it would seem, the UCLA psychohistorian, Peter Lowenberg, has discovered in the course of teaching his class that his students undergo a form of what Freudians call "counter-transference", that is to say, a projection on to history of their own unconscious prejudices. As a result he has concluded that psychohistorians must first submit themselves to professional training as psychoanalysts, which should include the psychoanalysis of themselves. One has the feeling that perhaps there is an infinite regress involved in this conclusion, but other historians take it seriously. Thus the very distinguished historian, Peter Gay, of Yale, is now, at the age of 52, undergoing psychoanalysis himself, as a means of advancing his professional studies; while Dr Charles Strozier, editor of the *Psychohistory Review*, has discovered there is a "kill-the-father" complex at work in the attitude of many of the younger psychohistorians towards the Daddy of them all, Erik Erikson, the author of a classical psychoanalytic study of the young Martin Luther.

One might reasonably say that this is an attitude not altogether unknown in other fields of study, and, far from indicating urgent cases for treatment, has in fact greatly contributed to the advancement of learning. But perhaps one should rather say that the difficulties which psychohistorians now face are evidence of a serious belief that psychohistory has become capable of making a genuine and valuable contribution to historical understanding, even though the obstacles in the way are formidable. Perhaps the most fundamental of them all has been succinctly stated by

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Fred Weinstein, the chairman of the American Historical Association's psychohistory section: "There is in psychoanalysis no systematic way of relating individual psychodynamics to wider social processes." But is this anything more than a slightly sophisticated statement of a special case of the general problem of the relation of the individual to history, which has plagued historians ever since history itself, and long before psychoanalysis, was invented?

SOME OF THE PROBLEMS with which psychohistorians are faced emerge very insistently from one of the latest contributions to the subject, *Nixon vs. Nixon: An Emotional Tragedy*,[1] by a distinguished American psychoanalyst, Dr David Abrahamsen, M.D. By now, after the great melodrama of Watergate, anything to do with Nixon's life and personality has a fatal fascination for me, as the stoat for the rabbit, and certainly Dr Abrahamsen's account of Mr Nixon's parents, of his childhood and youth, provides many clues to the mysteries of his enigmatic character—to his intense secretiveness combined with his desire for self-exposure, to the ruthlessness which concealed a profound sense of insecurity, to the extraordinary pattern of success and failure which repeated itself throughout his life. It really does not seem fantastic now to think that the sequence of crises which Mr Nixon so prided himself on surviving was really a cry for help, as if only through them could he show people what he really was like. The very impossibility of doing so carried him from one to another until, at last, in Watergate, he found the perfect scenario which would expose his most secret and hidden motives. How much, in the end, he reminded one of the inveterate gambler who, however often he beats the bank, is never really satisfied until he has beaten himself and lost everything.

There is, it seems to me, little doubt that Dr Abrahamsen's account of Mr Nixon's parents, and of the perfectly genuine traumas and deprivations of his childhood and youth, will be of real assistance to the historian. But it is the facts themselves which interest us, indeed so much that at moments *Nixon vs. Nixon* reads like some exceptionally enthralling novel, and gives us precisely the same kind of insight into character and situation which we expect of the novelist. On the other hand, the specifically psychoanalytic or psychiatric knowledge which Dr Abrahamsen brings to bear on his subject seems to add little if anything to what the facts themselves tell us, and if anything to make their message less rather than more persuasive and convincing.

What Dr Abrahamsen has done, as it seems to me, is to extend our interest backward to a period in his subject's life which the historian is apt to study only cursorily and negligently, as a matter of form rather than of content. Perhaps the real value of psychobiography to the historian is simply the importance it attaches to aspects of a man's life which the historian normally or frequently overlooks or underestimates. If the child really is the father of the man, then childhood assumes an importance which, on the whole, the historian has done no more than formally acknowledge.

TO THE PSYCHOHISTORIAN, perhaps, this may seem to belittle the contribution he can make to the study of the past. Instead of "revolutionising" it, he is simply, as I believe, adding one more to the already extensive armoury of weapons and techniques which the historian already has at his disposal. And in reading Dr Abrahamsen's book one feels once again, as so often before, that it is not so much the professional disciplines which the historian employs which matter, as the way in which he employs them—the tact, the restraint, the discretion, the sensibility, the simple respect for facts so far as we are able to know them, which he displays in his effort to understand and reconstruct what would otherwise be a dead and alien world. In much the same way, one supposes, in the psychiatrist or analyst what really matters is not so much the formal theoretical model he has made of the psyche or the self, but the delicacy, the sympathy, the intuitive insight with which he adapts it to the case of the individual patient.

Dr Abrahamsen's book interests and persuades us most when he simply recounts, as well as he can, the childhood experiences which made Mr Nixon the man he was and is, and make it easy for us to accept that there was a genuinely tragic force at work in his life and career. It is at its least convincing when he tries to force the facts into a preconceived theoretical framework.

NIXON VS. NIXON, however, also transmits alarming warning signals of what we must expect if the influence and popularity of psychohistory and psychobiography continue to increase as they have done in the United States. Mr Nixon, after all, is still alive, and deserves the kind of respect which is due to all living persons. President Ford decided to spare him, and the American people, the agony of bringing him to trial for whatever crimes he may or may not have committed; and I myself believe that the American

[1] *Nixon vs. Nixon: An Emotional Tragedy*. By DAVID ABRAHAMSEN. Farrar Straus & Giroux, $10.95, £3.50 (WHS Distributors).

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people accepted that wise decision with relief. But if Mr Nixon was spared impeachment, he is now being subjected to an even more severe and humiliating trial at the bar of psychohistory. Dr Abrahamsen's book touches, with a somewhat clumsy hand, on the most personal, intimate, and painful aspects of Mr Nixon's life, so painful indeed that, if Dr Abrahamsen is to be believed, he had to conceal them even from himself. As a psychiatrist, Dr Abrahamsen has no hesitation about displaying the wounds in public. The evidence on which this exposure is based all comes from second-hand sources. and is of a kind which would not stand up for a moment in a court of law; most of it, I would suspect, would not even be permissible.

One cannot help wondering whether there can be any possible justification for exposing any man to such treatment, whatever his crimes. It may be true, though I have often doubted it, that *tout comprendre, c'est tout pardonner*. But to be forgiven on Dr Abrahamsen's terms is something which, I think, most of us would gladly dispense with, however heavy our sins. Psychohistory, it would appear, can be more merciless and brutal than any judge, even a hanging one.

★

IT IS A RELIEF to turn from *Nixon vs. Nixon* to a new edition, from Chatto & Windus after an interval of over fifty years, of Henry Green's novel, *Blindness*.[2] It was written partly while he was still a boy at Eton and partly while an undergraduate at Magdalen College, Oxford; as such it is a quite astonishing *tour de force*. But it was also something rather more, because it announced the entry on the literary stage of the most genuinely original novelist of his day.

What is genuinely original depends neither on novelty, nor fashion or affronting accepted literary tastes and conventions. It depends on seeing the world from a different angle of vision than we are accustomed to adopt; and since habit is hard to break, it takes a long time before we can make it our own. But when we do it makes everything else look new, including all the masterpieces we have hitherto known. It presents us with a fresh perspective which is not only valid in its own right, but also modifies all the others to which we have grown accustomed. The genuinely original not only shows us a hitherto unsuspected world; it also changes the world we already know.

It was this precious gift which made Henry Green, or Henry Yorke, to give him his real name, so remarkable among all the other writers of his time. I am perhaps prejudiced in his favour, because for many years he was my greatest friend, and for seven of them I had the opportunity of spending most of every working day with him as his colleague in his father's business (Henry Pontifex Ltd, engineers, brass founders and coppersmiths). We separated only during the two hours each day which, when most people are eating their lunch, he devoted to writing his novels.

THE JACKET OF THE NEW EDITION of *Blindness* informs us that, while a business man, Green "pursued a parallel career as a novelist." But this is to misstate the case, as if the two careers continued to infinity without ever meeting, whereas the truth is that every moment of the day, whether in his office in London or in the factory and brass foundry in Birmingham, his novelist's mind was at work, discovering in the most ordinary circumstances of industrial and business life a strange poetry which in fact belonged to their very essence. It was out of this experience that he wrote *Living*, which is the best novel of English working-class life written in this century; just as *Back*, which was based on his war-time experiences as a member of the London Fire Brigade, is the best novel that has been written about London during the Blitz.

It was not only that, like a painter, he had an eye which took in a view of the world which normally escapes our notice. He also had an ear which was most delicately and sensitively attuned to every cadence and nuance of the English language as it is actually spoken. In later life he became deaf; this deprived him of what had been to him a constant and never-failing source of delight and inspiration, and thereafter he wrote no more. I have never known anyone so gifted, or so patient or so indefatigable in his search for the profound poetry of ordinary workaday life.

I have said that friendship may have made me prejudiced, but I am glad to see that so acute a critic as Rebecca West agrees with me. She says quite simply: "I feel he was the best writer of his time."

I am also delighted to see that, after *Blindness*, Picador will next year republish, in a single paperback volume, *Living*, *Loving*, and *Back*, which are probably the best of his novels. I very much hope that, for the reader's sake as well as Henry's, this will bring him the wide public recognition which his own originality denied him in his lifetime. Proust said that it took the public fifty years to recognise an original masterpiece. I hope that Henry's turn has come at last.

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[2] *Blindness*. By HENRY GREEN. Chatto & Windus, £3.95.

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Accident Prone, or What Happened Next

An Historian's Credo—By A. J. P. Taylor

A Galician priest was explaining to a peasant what miracles were.
"If I fell from that church tower and landed unhurt, what would you call it?"
"An accident."
"And if I fell again and was again unhurt?"
"Another accident."
"And if I did it a third time?"
"A habit."

(A story told me by Lewis Namier)

IN MY VERSION OF HISTORY, I am told, everything happens by accident. This, though not I think true of my books, has applied in my own life time and again. Or perhaps such a steady record of accidents implies some kind of predestination. It never crossed my mind, when young, that I might become a professional historian. I did not seek my various careers—historian, journalist, television star. They sought me. I did not even devise the subjects of my books. All, with one exception, were suggested to me by others. Ironically the one exception, *The Origins of the Second World War*, brought more trouble on my head than all my other books put together, trouble that I did not foresee or intend to provoke. There must be a moral here.

Certainly I loved history as far back as I can remember. I cannot explain this. It seems to me natural, just like loving music or the Lake District mountains. The first book I read, at the age of four, was *Pilgrim's Progress*—in its way a great historical work. Later I read all the historical novels I could lay my hands on: Harrison Ainsworth, Kingsley, Bulwer Lytton, G. A. Henty, the drabber and more factual the better. I could not take historical novels with real characters in them. That, I suppose, is why I never read Scott, greatest of historical novelists, until I was adult. Later I read indiscriminately works of historical narration. It seemed obvious to me that the historian's prime duty was to answer my childish question: "What happened next?" It seems almost as obvious to me now. The book that pleased me most was H. G. Wells's *Outline of History*, read as it came out in its original fortnightly parts—not that I accepted Wells's version of events moving inevitably toward a World State. This passion for history is still with me. Every book that arrives on my desk for review excites me, and the prospect of myself writing a book on a good theme excites me still more.

I WAS ALWAYS a "loner", a solitary only child, out of step in all sorts of ways, rarely influenced by others and learning by the painful process of trial and error. I was born and grew up in Lancashire, which marked me off from the predominant, non-industrial culture of southern England. When I first went to Oxford, I was astonished to find a town not dominated by mill chimneys and with few mean streets. I came of Radical, Dissenting stock on both sides. A collateral ancestor of my father's was killed at Peterloo. My maternal great-grandfather voted for Orator Hunt at the Preston by-election in 1830 and received one of the medals struck in honour of "the free and independent voters of Preston." My father was a Lloyd George Radical before the First World War. After it, when most of his fellow cotton merchants went Right, he went Left. He joined the Independent Labour party. In due course he became a Labour representative on Preston town council and was a member of the local strike committee during the general strike of 1926.

I was always on good terms with my father and went along with his Socialism. I am told this is an abnormal relationship psychologically, making one uncombative and lacking in self-confidence. I cannot say that it had any such effect in my case. On the contrary it made me more confident to have a secure family background. It is a curious thing to be an hereditary dissenter. On the one hand, you reject established views—religious in earlier times, political and social in our own. On the other, you have no inner conflict in doing so. Indeed you would have a conflict only if you accepted them. On a committee I usually put forward subversive ideas and at the same time insist that the existing rules must be rigorously observed until they are

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changed. Something the same applies to my books. The framework is strictly conventional—old-fashioned history, as one reviewer recently called it. But the ideas stuffed into the framework do not conform to accepted views. This is, I suppose, why my books annoy some people—I am a traitor within the gates.

MY EDUCATION increased my separation from the traditional stream of English culture. I went first to a Quaker preparatory school and then to Bootham, a Quaker public school at York. At both I experienced the physical hardships which were then the distinctive mark of English education. In other ways, my schools were different. The Society of Friends is certainly a community, but one resolutely out of step with the larger one. In spirit and outlook I am closer to the Friends than to any other body, except that they believe in God and I do not. Theirs is of course a special sort of God. What they really believe in is That of God in every man, a belief I share. This has given another firm point in my life, or rather two: I am no better than anyone else, and no one else is better than me. These rules of thumb have carried me a long way.

I did not acquire much understanding of history at either of my schools. At my preparatory school I learned the dates of the Kings and Queens of England, went on to the dates of the Kings of France and the Holy Roman Emperors, and was hesitating whether to do the sultans of Turkey or the Popes of Rome next when I left the school. At Bootham I read innumerable textbooks and, when my history master challenged me to read a long book, went right through Gibbon in a fortnight. But my history was still no more than an undiscriminating appetite. Understanding came in a different way. I collected Gothic churches and abbeys, spending far more time on this than on my schoolwork. This was the first field that brought the past alive to me. I carried a tape-measure and a set square and produced ground plans of impeccable accuracy, with the various styles picked out in colour. But being unable to draw freehand, I could never produce elevations. There is a parallel here with my books. They provide ground plans, and the reader has to put in the elevations.

I HAD NO DOUBT what I wanted to do when I left school: simply to go on with what I loved, history, though with no idea of what this would lead to or how to turn it to any practical use. Oxford was my first encounter with traditional England, and very surprising it was. For instance, though I had measured and described countless churches, I had never reflected what they were for. I had never attended a service of the Church of England and was astonished when I first entered the College chapel. I soon cried off attendance as an atheist. The dean said to me: "Do come and talk to me about your doubts." I answered: "I have none." Oxford's reaction to the general strike also took me unawares. Most of the undergraduates went off as strike-breakers. I went back to Lancashire and drove a car—then a rare accomplishment—for my father's strike committee.

Most of my time at Oxford was spent on medieval history, then a flourishing subject. The older views were being knocked about, which had a certain charm. Otherwise not much of it interested me except for the Peasant's Revolt. As to modern history, when we reached the Glorious Revolution, my tutor said to me: "You know all the rest from your work at school, so we do not need to do any more." I picked up my knowledge of modern history, such as it was, mainly from the works of Sir John Marriott, an historian now no doubt forgotten. I suspect that I am the Marriott *de nos jours*, except that he was very much on the Right and I am very much on the Left. I cultivated the revolutions of 1848 after reading Marx's *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon*, the book of his—apart of course from the Communist Manifesto—that I most admired. I also conceived a great admiration for Sorel's *Europe and the French Revolution*, more for its style than its content, and for many years tried to emulate his epigrammatic style, as readers of *The Course of German History* can see for themselves.

I DID NOT GO to any lectures except those of Sir Charles Oman and that only because Sir Charles, being very old, was a period piece. I never saw an original document or received any guidance in historical method. I was unaware of the existence of the Stubbs Society, the select society which promising historians are invited to join, or of the Ford Lectures, the most prestigious lectures in the English-speaking world. Now that I come to think of it, I did not have as a friend a single undergraduate who was reading history. My own friends were either literary, such as Norman Cameron the poet and J. I. M. Stewart, later famous as a detective-story writer, or merely young men who like me were enjoying themselves.

I called myself a Marxist from the time I became a Socialist. But, reading more history at Oxford, I began to feel that Marxism did not work. Consider the famous sentence in the Communist Manifesto: "The history of all hitherto recorded society is the history of class struggles." Very impressive but not true. Perhaps all history ought to have been the history of class

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struggles, but things did not work out that way. There have been long periods of class collaboration and many struggles that were not about class at all. I suppose my mind is too anarchic to be fitted into any system of thought. Like Johnson's friend Edwards, I, too, have tried to be a Marxist but common sense kept breaking in.

One day a friend said to me: "Why do you not join the Communist party?" Offhand I could think of no ready answer and on these inadequate grounds became a member of the party for a couple of years. My experiences in the general strike showed me that the Communist party played no significant part in the working-class movement, and my disillusionment was complete when Trotsky was expelled from the Russian party and then from Russia. Not that I understood the rights and wrongs of the dispute if it had any. I simply thought that a party which expelled a man of such gifts, merely because he disagreed with the accepted line, was not for me. I quietly lapsed and so escaped the soul torments over Communism that racked so many British and American intellectuals during the 1930s.

IN 1927 I got a First in my history finals. This surprised me. I had thought that perhaps I was clever-clever, but certainly not that I was history-clever. Perhaps clever-clever is enough in the History School at Oxford. However it did not concern me. I wanted to escape the ivory towers of Oxford and go into what I imagined was "real life." Six months in a law office taught me my mistake. I drifted back to Oxford, at a loss what to do. Someone, I think Davis, the Regius Professor, suggested that I should go to Vienna and work under Pribram, who was reputed to be an authority on Oliver Cromwell. This seemed as good a way as any of learning German, quite apart from the fact that Vienna was highly esteemed in Socialist circles. So off I went and lived in Vienna for two years.

I FOUND that Pribram had lost interest in Cromwell and had now moved on to the origins of the First World War. This was no good to me who knew no history after the Congress of Berlin. Pribram charitably suggested that I should work on Anglo-Austrian relations between 1848 and 1860, and I duly settled down in the *Staatsarchiv*. I received no instruction how to conduct research. I was not even warned to put down the number of the document I was copying, which caused me a great deal of unnecessary work later. I knew none of the techniques of diplomatic history. I just dived in at the deep end. Imperceptibly I found a better subject: not Anglo-Austrian relations in the void, but the diplomacy of the North Italian question during the revolution of 1848. I gradually trained myself to be a diplomatic historian and was quite competent in this modest art by the time I went on to work in the British and French archives. I suppose I ought to have worked in the Italian archives as well, but of course it was out of the question for me to go to Italy in Mussolini's time.

Though I was now doing historical research I was far from certain that I should become a professional historian. I had no patron or supervisor in England. I did not enrol as a student at the University of Vienna and, though I had many social meetings with Pribram, never received any guidance from him after his initial suggestion. I vaguely foresaw that, with my newly acquired command of German, I might become a foreign correspondent. Even more wildly, I took serious steps to become an inspector of ancient monuments, a post for which, apart from my knowledge of Gothic architecture, I was totally unqualified. However, events decided for me in their usual way.

In the spring of 1930 Pribram went to Oxford and delivered the Ford Lectures. One night he sat next to Ernest Jacob at dinner. Jacob had just become head of the history department at Manchester. The professor and lecturer in modern European history had both left, and Jacob was without anyone to teach the subject in the coming academic year. He asked whether Pribram knew of anyone. Pribram, perhaps grateful for the help I had given him in translating his Ford Lectures into English, mentioned me. The next morning Jacob sent me a telegram offering me the job of lecturer. And that is how I became committed to history.

I HAD HARDLY BEEN AWARE until that moment that there was a university in Manchester and my main feeling was pleasure at going home to Lancashire. In fact, the Manchester History School was at that time the most distinguished in Great Britain. The department was very small: three professors, one reader, and four lecturers in all. It never occurred to us that we might have a duty to society. Our sole task, we thought, was to train historians. No professor of modern history had yet been appointed. Hence, in my first year at Manchester I did the work of both professor and lecturer, another case of diving in at the deep end.

I had to cover all European history from 1494 to 1914 and knew none of it except for the French Revolution and patches of the 19th century until the Congress of Berlin. I bought a set of old-fashioned textbooks (Rivington blue) and compiled notes for 96 lectures. For the period

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before the First World War I used the "revisionist" books that were then in favour and produced an impeccably pro-German account. After delivering my lectures once, I decided that it would be tedious to give the same lectures year after year. I threw away my notes and thereafter lectured without notes as I have done ever since. I do not know whether I taught my enormous classes anything. But I taught myself history, literally on my feet. I also taught myself to address mass audiences without a tremor. This has often worried me. Most orators are desperately nervous before they speak—Lloyd George's shirt was always wet through. I have never trembled before either an audience or the television cameras.

When I had been at Manchester a year, Namier arrived as professor of modern history. It is sometimes said that I was his pupil. This is not so. I was already an established lecturer when Namier came and, if anything, he was my pupil, not I his. At least I tried to teach him how Manchester University worked, in which I was unsuccessful. Namier was at this time wholly taken up with English politics in the early reign of George III, a subject that did not concern me. Of course I was fascinated by his stories, but I did not share his outlook and was indeed "the friendly critic", as he called me, who accused him of taking the mind out of history. It is strange that this great man, who deplored the influence of political ideas, should have repeatedly jeopardised his career for the sake of Zionism, a political idea if ever there were one.

MY VIEWS OF European history were reached independently of Namier, though we broadly agreed on most things. He had not kept up with the most recent work on the subject and occasionally I was in the happy position of telling him something instead of listening. Also our methods were different. He was a painstaking and laborious scholar. I often relied on intuition. I once made some point in a review. Namier asked me: "How did you know that? I worked on the topic for three weeks before I found it." I said I felt it must be so. He replied: "Ah, you have green fingers. I have not." Some may say that I have relied on my green fingers too much. I think I have relied on them too little. For instance I felt from the first day that van der Lubbe set fire to the *Reichstag* all alone. But I hesitated to champion this view against the weight of received opinion until Tobias vindicated it some thirty years afterward.

If I had a teacher at Manchester and indeed afterward, it was A. P. Wadsworth, not Namier. Wadsworth was deputy editor and then editor of the *Manchester Guardian* and also an economic historian of great distinction. He set me to writing leader-page articles on anniversaries of famous men or events and later on the inter-war diplomatic documents as they came out. Wadsworth was a hard taskmaster. He constantly said to me: "An article in the *Guardian* is no good unless people read it on the way to work." I followed his instruction. My guiding principle, in my writings as in my lectures, has always been: "Give the customer what he wants"—which does not of course mean "what he would like to hear." I worried about my style as much as about my scholarship. In my opinion a work of history misfires unless readers get the same pleasure from it that they do from a novel. My models were Bunyan, Cobbett and Shaw, though I would not claim to reach their standard. I suspect that those who are shocked by my views would be less perturbed if I wrapped them up in the prolixity usual in historical writing.

I ALSO LEARNED a good deal at Manchester from contemporary events and my own political activities. I advocated resistance to Hitler from the moment he came to power. But I also thought that the National government were more likely to support Hitler against Russia than to go against him and therefore I opposed rearmament until we got a change of government. In 1935 I opposed support for the League of Nations by the existing government as a fraud, which it turned out to be, and remember one splendid meeting with the entire audience, composed half of Communists and half of members of the League of Nations Union, vociferously against me. With the reoccupation of the Rhineland, I decided that we must rearm even under the National government and was convinced that if we took a firm line with Hitler there would be no war. I was one of the few people outside London who addressed meetings against appeasement at the time of Munich, and very rough they were. I have not changed the views I held then.

THOUGH I OFTEN DABBLED in politics I never devoted myself to them or sought a political career.

Once when I applied for an appointment at Oxford which I did not get, the president of the College concerned said to me sternly: "I hear you have strong political views." I said: "Oh no, President. Extreme views weakly held." This has remained my position.

But, growing up in a political household and myself involved in politics on the fringe, I automatically assumed that politics expressed the activities of "man in society", as the theme of history has rightly been called. All other forms

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of history—economic history, social history, psychological history, above all sociology—seem to me history with the history left out. And when I am told quite erroneously that my form of history is merely a record of events, I can only reply that so are all other forms. A ship sailing from Venice to Constantinople is as much an event as a general election or an army marching to battle. It all depends on what you make of them.

Namier affected me in one practical way. He thought we ought to have a special subject on pre-War diplomacy and, being too busy to do this himself, shoved it on to me. I forgot all my previous views and started again from scratch, reading *Die grosse Politik* and then the British and French documents from cover to cover. When I had finished, I no longer thought that Germany was the innocent victim of Entente diplomacy. I was not even sure that the First World War happened by accident. My new absorption with pre-War diplomacy attracted the attention of E. L. Woodward, who was almost alone at Oxford in promoting its study, and in 1938 he helped me to get a fellowship at Magdalen, which I held happily until I reached retiring age.

MY FIRST REAL BOOKS which I wrote soon after moving to Oxford again came to me by chance. Harold Macmillan wanted a short history of the Habsburg Monarchy in its later days. Namier was again too busy and again I took it on. Then during the War *PWE* (Political Warfare Executive) wanted a chapter on the Weimar Republic for a handbook they were preparing. I wrote it. However, *PWE* found my chapter not sufficiently enthusiastic about German democracy and therefore too depressing for their handbook. Denis Brogan said: "Why not turn it into a book?" I took his advice and wrote *The Course of German History*. Of course both books were affected by the War, but not more, I think, than it affects me still. Since the War centred on Germany I had to explain why the Germans got where they did. With *The Habsburg Monarchy*, I learned a great deal from central European refugees: Hubert Ripka, the predestined successor of Beneš, though he never stepped into his inheritance; Michael Karolyi, who became one of my dearest friends; and the Slovenes with whom I worked towards the end of the War in an attempt to get Trieste for Yugoslavia.

I HAVE OFTEN BEEN CALLED a narrative historian, a title of which I am not ashamed. After all, the distinguishing mark of history is that events happen in order of time. How else can you present them? But these two books of mine are not really narrative; they are explanation. They try to answer the question, how did it happen? How did the Habsburg Monarchy decline and go to pieces? How did Germany remain a militaristic Power, less democratic than either England or France? The customer wanted explanations; I tried to provide them. Actually I was less affected by the War than I ought to have been. I should have seen that the Habsburg Monarchy disintegrated because of defeat in war and for no other reason. However I am still reasonably content with *The Habsburg Monarchy*. I saw German history from outside—partly as an Englishman, partly as an Austrian—and I would not claim that there is anything original in *The Course of German History*. But at least I had read Eckhart Kehr, which most English historians at that time had not.

THE WAR AFFECTED ME in other ways. It gave me a warning, which I did not always heed, against trying to learn from history. In 1940 I was convinced that the Germans would not invade England. I was right but for entirely the wrong reason. I thought that, on the analogy of Bonaparte in 1798, the Germans would make ostensible preparations to invade England and in fact invade the Middle East. The analogy was false: Hitler never had any offensive plans in the Middle East and did not invade England simply because his forces were not strong enough to do so. Later during the War I gave innumerable talks on the War and current affairs which enabled me to see the War in some sort of historical perspective. Indeed looking back I remember much more of my lectures and interpretations than of what was actually happening.

The Oxford History School, however, stopped in 1939, as it still does, and there was no academic use for my knowledge of the Second World War. I went back to my study of diplomatic history before 1914 and was wondering what use to make of this when I had another stroke of luck. Deakin and Bullock launched the *Oxford History of Modern Europe*. There were to be volumes on the general history of the principal nation states and in addition three on diplomatic history. I gladly undertook the middle of these, extending from the revolutions of 1848 to the coming of Lenin and Woodrow Wilson in 1918. Thus accident had intervened again. By definition I was strictly confined to diplomatic history which suited me very well.

THIS WAS THE FIRST BOOK I thought about before I wrote it. I should have no difficulty, except hard work, over the diplomatic details. But what about "*les forces profondes*", as Renouvin has called

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them? I had difficulty, as Renouvin had, in reconciling them with the play of accident that determines the day-to-day course of events. For instance a war between the two Germanic Powers and the rest was very likely in the early years of the 20th century. But the actual war that broke out in August 1914 would not have occurred as it did if Archduke Franz Ferdinand had not gone to Sarajevo on 28 June or even if his chauffeur had not taken a wrong turning. I suppose something the same is true of all history. *Les forces profondes* are there all right if you cover a century in a single essay, as Namier did in that wonderful essay "From Vienna to Versailles." But when you look at details, individual men affect even the greatest events. No doubt France would have been diminished somehow in the later 19th century, but she would have declined differently without Napoleon III. No doubt Germany would have become greater in any case, but the way in which she became great was determined by Bismarck. The historian, I think, just has to accept life and put up with it.

I TRIED TO STRIKE A BALANCE by drawing the general outline of these seventy years in a long introduction and then putting in the details as the Pre-Raphaelites used to do with their pictures. Maybe I did not get the balance right. When I think back to *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe*, it seems to me a fascinating recital of diplomatic episodes, each chapter suited to appear as an article in a learned journal and adding up to an unreadable book. However when I open the book again I do not see how it could have been done otherwise and there is far more in it about *les forces profondes* than I had remembered. The book established my reputation as a scholar, at any rate in some circles, and is the only one of my books to be translated into Russian. Of course the Russians paid me only in blocked roubles, and it exasperates me to see copies of the Russian translation on the shelves of university libraries whenever I go to Eastern Europe. (Incidentally, the Russian translator changed my sentence "Wilson was as much a Utopian as Lenin" to "Wilson was a Utopian.")

THOUGH I DID NOT KNOW IT, *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe* was virtually my farewell to 19th-century Europe and, in a sense, to diplomatic history also. I followed it up by a biography of Bismarck, written on the initiative of an American publisher, but the interest in it for me was not the political history, which I was now writing for the third time, but Bismarck the man. For once I tried to be a psychologist. I did not get very far. I found that Bismarck, too, got on well with his father and, according to all the rules, should have been timid and unaggressive. I decided that psychology did not provide much help to historians and that men have the disposition they are born with—a conclusion reinforced later when I wrote the life of Beaverbrook. Apart from that I fell mildly in love with Bismarck. Every historian, I think, should write one biography, if only to learn how different it is from writing history. Men become more important than events, as I suppose they should be. I prefer writing history all the same.

AND NOW AN EXTRAORDINARY THING happened to me, the most extraordinary indeed that happened in my life. One evening I received an invitation to deliver the Ford Lectures at Oxford. I knew great historians gave the Ford Lectures. My friend Richard Pares had given them, and so had my colleague Bruce McFarlane. But me—the industrious hack, compiling records of events? Besides the Ford Lectures were on English history, and I still thought of myself as an historian of Europe. I wandered out into the night, encountered Alan Bullock and told him my plight. He said: "You have always opposed British foreign policy. Now tell us about the men who opposed it in the past." I was intoxicated with delight: a wonderful subject that no one had thought of before. The outcome was *The Troublemakers*, by far my favourite brainchild and the one I hope to be remembered by. I suppose it should be classed as history of ideas. For me, the ideas, the men, and the excitement of presenting them were all mixed up. *The Troublemakers* was not all praise. Michael Foot called it: "The book in which you stabbed all your friends in the back"—a complaint he repeated about my political arguments when we used to appear together on television. All the same the Troublemakers are my heroes so far as I have ever found any.

1956 was altogether a wonderful year. I delivered the Ford Lectures. I was elected to the British Academy, according to Galbraith on the strength of my bibliography in *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe*. It was the year of the Suez crisis when I thought that the Boer War had come again and that we faced a long period of unpopularity, persecution, and perhaps imprisonment. This was another error in trying to learn from history: the miserable British government could not even sin properly and called off their aggression within a week. Most of all, 1956 was the year I met Beaverbrook.

The occasion for this was characteristic. He had just published *Men and Power*. In it he told how Lloyd George, when imposing convoy on

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the reluctant admirals, descended on the Admiralty "and seated himself in the First Lord's chair." I was pretty sure that there had not been a meeting of the Admiralty Board that day. I wrote asking Beaverbrook for his evidence. He invited me to lunch and said: "I'm sure it happened" and, when I pressed him again, "I'll ask Churchill", which of course he never did. Years later I found that he had inserted the story on the proof in order to liven things up.

However it did not matter. I was bewitched by this master of political narrative and by the historical zest that inspired a man nearly eighty. Beaverbrook, apart from delighting me, switched my attention to English history. Another pull towards it came in a more orthodox way. One afternoon I went for a walk with G. N. Clark, the editor of the *Oxford History of England*. He said casually: "I must do something about a final volume in the *Oxford History of England*, to pick up in 1914 where Ensor leaves off. Ensor was planning to do it and now he is dead. Perhaps I'll have a try at it myself." I said: "What about me?" and with that I was in—not only my next book, but many years of my life determined. Yet it would never have happened if G. N. Clark and I had not gone for a walk in Wytham Woods that autumn afternoon.

I was starting this time much more from scratch. I had never taught 20th-century English history and had not kept up with the work on it systematically. I had reviewed most of the principal memoirs and other books as they came out. But mostly my knowledge was a matter of memory—an unreliable source. However I began to read very hard. The subject had at any rate the advantage that most of the books on it were in English and the even greater advantage that they were nearly all in the London Library. No more reading German; no more going to the British Museum. These two things were almost reward enough in themselves.

I HAD HARDLY SETTLED DOWN when I had to break off. Distractions made a hole in my life for two years and more. It was my turn to serve as vice-president of Magdalen College just when it celebrated its quincentenary and as vice-president I had to organise it all. This was very enjoyable and, for an historian, very interesting. But it took up much of my time: arranging dinners and parties, commissioning a fireworks display, even attending a service at the tomb of our founder, William of Waynflete, in Winchester Cathedral. I left a note of my mistakes for my successor in 2058. He will learn from it how to make new ones.

A greater distraction was the call of duty when the "Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament" started. This was the only public cause to which I devoted myself wholeheartedly and, I think, the one worthy thing I have done in my life. I became one of the national speakers and for two years or so toured the great public halls throughout the country. I reckon I spoke in more halls than either Bright or Gladstone did, if only because some of the halls were not built in their time. With *The Troublemakers* fresh in my mind, I tried to achieve the same effect. Where my colleagues appealed to emotion, I relied on hard argument to show the folly as well as the wickedness of nuclear weapons. My model was Cobden—"I know the Blue Books as well as the noble Lord does." My best evening came at Birmingham Town Hall where I spoke precisely a hundred years after Bright delivered there his great speech on British foreign policy—"a gigantic system of out-relief for the British aristocracy."

THE CAMPAIGN was very instructive for me as an historian. Mass meetings are intoxicating for both audience and speaker. You imagine you have really achieved something when you get four thousand people on their feet with enthusiasm, and I suppose much the same is true of a successful speech in the House of Commons. This was a warning to me that politicians cannot be wholly sane. Nor were we in the great days of the campaign. We genuinely believed when we started that the whole world would be impressed if Great Britain renounced nuclear weapons and would follow our moral lead. In this way CND was a last splutter of imperial pride. The Cuba "missile crisis" taught us better. No one cared in the slightest whether we had nuclear weapons or not, which was of course a strong argument for abandoning them. The Cuba crisis virtually killed CND, and I have never involved myself in politics since.

THOUGH I WAS TOO BUSY to do much serious research during this turmoil, I needed to write something—"always scribble, scribble, scribble! Eh! Mr. Gibbon?" I had been studying the background to the Second World War ever since the material began to come out and now could go straight ahead. This is how I came to write *The Origins of the Second World War*, the only subject I thought of myself. The title was of course wrong, as I realised when I came to write the last sentence. What happened in September 1939 was a minor episode in the Second World War, not the World War itself, which began either much earlier (April 1932) or much later (December 1941). But at this time my mind was still centred on Europe. The views expressed in

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the book followed logically on those I had developed in *The Course of German History*. They have now become the current orthodoxy. Indeed with Fritz Fischer and his school claiming that German statesmen actually designed the First World War and were, if anything, more extreme than Hitler, I find myself trailing far behind. However I do not intend to fight again the controversies that the book provoked. I had tried to write history in detachment; my critics were concerned to express their emotions. I will only add that, when criticising an author, I have never descended to personal abuse. I cannot say the same about my critics.

WHEN I RETURNED to *English History, 1914-1945*, I was not a free agent. I came at the end of a long-established series and had to conform to its pattern, putting in biographical footnotes and lists of Cabinet ministers. I read all the preceding 14 volumes in the series, though, to be honest, I managed to get right through only five of them. They troubled me. Where was the story line? Most of the books seemed to me collections of independent essays. I decided to write in the form of a continuous narrative. There was some sleight of hand about this. Continuous narrative works when you are confined to a single theme, such as the origins of a war. It is harder, indeed almost impossible, when you have to handle every aspect of national life. So I used a narrative framework and slipped in what I called "occasional pauses for refreshment." I maintained the solemn tone of the previous writers, pontificating about writers as though I were qualified to judge them. Somehow the book did not come out all that solemn in the end.

There were other problems. For instance, what was "England"? All the previous writers had used England, Great Britain, the United Kingdom, and even the British Empire as synonymous terms, as they were when the series had been launched thirty years before. Now with the Scotch roaring at my back, I could not do this and yet would not write the history of 20th-century England in isolation. This is a problem not encountered by historians of other European countries except perhaps the Germans, who, I notice, often manage to write the history of Germany without mentioning Austria. I did my best with a compromise that worked out all right.

MORE SERIOUSLY, what England was I writing about? Again my predecessors had not worried about this and had written the history of the English upper classes. I wanted to write the history of the English people. But even in the 20th century the English people had little history except at moments of crisis, though I do not know whether this made them happy. I kept slithering into the old fashion of writing about the "*in*" classes and then pulled myself up every now and then. I must have done better than I expected. At any rate Max Beloff called me a Populist historian, which was exactly what I wanted to be.

I WROTE ALL MY earlier works virtually without consulting anybody. *English History, 1914-1945* went through the mill. G. N. Clark was a model editor, often querying what I wrote and then accepting it when I said it was necessary. My greatest aid came from Ken Tite, my colleague who was politics tutor at Magdalen. He should have been an outstanding political historian himself, but he was a sick man who died comparatively young without writing a book. Ken read my draft and wrote some forty pages of foolscap comments on it. I absorbed his points, and he then wrote fifteen more pages. My book was certainly chewed over, and I record with a full heart my gratitude to Ken Tite. Beaverbrook provided some of the anecdotes, not all of them reliable. More than this he gave me a firm conviction that English history was an exciting subject. Indeed on one occasion he inspired me to go on when my spirits flagged and I was inclined to break off.

THERE IS NOT MUCH to add to this record. I spent five years writing a life of Beaverbrook. This was a labour of love and does not illustrate any theory of history or biography. Beaverbrook lived a long time and managed to combine six different sorts of careers, so the book came out much longer than he would have liked. He himself came out a greater man than I had expected, but that was his doing, not mine. At any rate I wrote the book with my heart as well as with my head.

I even tried my hand at cultural history. Geoffrey Barraclough conscripted me to contribute to a series on the history of civilisation he was editing. I tried to find out what "civilisation" meant and received many dusty answers. I decided that it meant the predominating patterns of life at any given time and, as war and economic problems predominated in the first half of the 20th century, *From Sarajevo to Potsdam* came out political after all. My short histories of the two World Wars—both suggested by a publisher—gave me greater pleasure. Without design they are curiously, and I think appropriately, different in tone. *The First World War* appears as a muddle from beginning to end. Shortly after it was published, I went to Joan Littlewood's show *Oh! What a Lovely War* and found the entire cast reading my book, delighted to have their version

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confirmed by a serious, or fairly serious, historian. *The Second World War* has a much firmer construction. It is, I think, the first account that binds the two wars, German and Japanese, into a single coherent pattern. I regard the book as being, in relatively short compass, the best demonstration of my way of writing history. Perhaps this is only because it is the most recent book I have written.

THE DIFFICULTIES I have encountered in writing history have been practical and technical. The greatest difficulty is time. You have to read a great deal, chase evidence all over the place, and make copious notes many of which you cannot lay hands on when you need them. I have of course never used a research assistant. No individual history can be written with one. As a writer my first model was Albert Sorel, and *The Course of German History* is peppered with epigrams that seek to imitate his. *The Habsburg Monarchy* often echoes the style of *The Thirties* by Malcolm Muggeridge which I happened to be reading at the time. Since then my style has been my own. It has however changed with my writing instruments. With a pen you write words. With a typewriter you write sentences. With an electric typewriter, which I use now, you write paragraphs. In military terms: bow and arrow, musket, machine gun. I try to keep up a continuous fire.

NO OXFORD CHAIR OF HISTORY has come my way, though there were plenty around in my time. This was no doubt accidental, with perhaps a tinge of disapproval for either me or recent history. I was glad to escape the administrative duties that fall to a professor. My only regret is that professors tend to grab most of the research students, and I could have done with more. This has been a loss for me and perhaps for some research students.

My emancipation from teaching was completed in 1963, when the History Faculty Board terminated my university lectureship for reasons that are still obscure to me. Magdalen College gave me a research fellowship, and University College, London, made me a special lecturer, which gave me just enough lecturing to keep my hand in. When I had passed the retiring age for university lecturers I began lecturing again at Oxford just to show what it had missed. For this the Faculty Board paid me £40 a year. For the most part I make my living from journalism and television. Even so, I do not suppose anyone would dispute my claim to be a professional historian.

The other great difficulty is material. History, unlike poetry or fiction, does not write itself. For recent times, which I have always stuck to, there seems only too much material, and yet new evidence is constantly coming out. Often I have had to change my ground while writing a book or, still worse, after it has been written. When I finished *English History, 1914–1945* in July 1964, the fifty-year rule was in force and not a single classified British paper was available. Now the British archives are open, I suspect a little selectively, until 1945. I fear that my next task is to write the whole book all over again. If I do, it will work out differently. In the early 1960s I was still writing under the impact of the Second World War which was the most inspiring time in our history. Now I regard the state and still more the future of my country more gloomily. Indeed I often wonder whether it is worthwhile writing history at all. The record, I think, is nearly over. However history is fun to write and, I hope, fun to read. That to my mind is its justification.

ON A MORE SERIOUS LEVEL, I believe that history enables us to understand the past better, no more and no less. This is a matter of detached curiosity, and there can be no nobler exercise of the human mind. I have never supposed, as many earlier historians did, that men can learn any useful lesssons from history, political or otherwise. Of course you can learn certain obvious commonplaces, such as that all men die or that one day the deterrent, whatever it may be, will fail to deter. Apart from this, history is an art just like painting or architecture and is designed like them to give intellectual and artistic pleasure.

I HAVE NEVER BEEN TROUBLED by the dogmas of others about what history should be or how it should be written. Most of this is sales talk by academics anxious to justify their existence. My view is that they should get on with writing books in their way and I will get on with writing them in mine. I have always been conscious of the artificiality of history. We sort human beings into national or class categories, when in reality each one of them is unique. Bernard Shaw was delighted to learn from an oculist that only one man in a thousand has completely "normal" vision. Who has ever known a typical working man or even a typical university professor? When I sit on the beach at Brighton, I am surrounded by the masses, but I do not number myself among them and no doubt each one of the others would make the same exception for himself.

Some historians understand science and technology. Some understand philosophy. I know

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how a newspaper office works, which makes me sceptical about studies of public opinion. I know what to do in a television studio and can talk straight to camera for twenty-five minutes, twenty-seven seconds, which allows for the commercial break. Even in my more adventurous days, I kept almost entirely to Europe. I have been to almost every European country, including Soviet Russia in the happy days of *NEP*. Outside Europe I went once to Morocco and once to New Brunswick. On the latter occasion I looked across the bay from St Andrews to Maine, so I can say I have seen the United States, or at any rate one of them. Nowadays I stick mainly to England and recently kept my sense of history alive by walking the 150 miles of Offa's Dike.

I AM English by birth and preference and, I suppose, in character. This has no relevance to my work as an historian. Seeley—or was it Freeman—said: "History is past politics." If this means that history should be used as a political weapon, I am not of Seeley's (or Freeman's) opinion. When I write, I have no loyalty except to historical truth as I see it and care no more about British achievements or mistakes than about any others. I was deeply concerned in the general strike, the Second World War, and the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. But this does not weigh with me when I treat them historically. I think that the English people of the 20th century were a fine people and deserved better leaders than on the whole they got. This is, if anything, the moral of *English History, 1914-1945*, but I left the reader to find it out for himself. At any rate national loyalty or even disloyalty has never been among my difficulties as an historian.

Dr Johnson said:

> "Great abilities are not requisite for an Historian: for in historical composition, all the greatest powers of the human mind are quiescent. He has facts ready to his hand; so there is no exercise of invention. Imagination is not required in any high degree; only about as much as is used in the lower kinds of poetry. Some penetration, accuracy, and colouring will fit a man for the task, if he can give the application which is necessary."

That is about right, though the historian needs more invention than Johnson supposed. I am short on imagination and have never managed to write a line of poetry or a paragraph of fiction. Penetration is, I hope, another name for green fingers. Every historian tries to be accurate, though none succeeds as fully as he would like to. Style is colouring and something more: it sets its stamp on the whole work. As Johnson says, application is the main thing.

Writing history is like W. C. Fields juggling. It looks easy until you try to do it.

AUTHORS

Philip Purser is Television Critic of the *Sunday Telegraph*. His most recent novel is *The Last Great Tram Race* (Hodder, 1974). His piece "Mutiny on the T. S. Eliot" appeared in the April 1977 ENCOUNTER.

A. J. P. Taylor writes: "The *Journal of Modern History* occasionally devotes an entire number to the work of a single historian. Fernand Braudel was the first so honoured in 1972. I followed in 1977. W. H. McNeill, the editor, asked me to explain what had shaped me as an historian. How did I become an historian in the first place? Which historians or other writers had influenced me? What were my aims and outlooks when writing history? What difficulties had I encountered? I had never reflected on these problems before. Confronted by such an invitation, I attempted a sort of intellectual autobiography. Critical essays followed by other historians from whom I learnt characteristics of my work that I had never been aware of or even suspected before."

Hugh Thomas was until recently Professor of History at Reading University. Among his books are *The Spanish Civil War* (1961), rev. ed, *Cuba, or the Pursuit of Freedom* (1971), *The Radical Challenge* (1973) and *The World of Malraux* (1976).

Hilary Spurling's *Handbook to Anthony Powell's Music of Time* will be published by Heinemann this month.

Shirley Robin Letwin is the author of *The Pursuit of Certainty*, a study of Hume, Bentham, J. S. Mill and Beatrice Webb (Cambridge University Press, 1965). She has published essays and a monograph, *Modern Philosophies of Law* (1972), on philosophy and law and is currently completing a book on *Trollope's Gentleman: An English Morality*. Her article "Morality and Law" appeared in the November 1974 ENCOUNTER.

Tom Paulin is a lecturer in English at Nottingham University, and the author of *Thomas Hardy: The Poetry of Perception* (Macmillan, 1976). His own book of poems, *A State of Justice* (Faber), was the Spring 1977 Choice of the Poetry Book Society.

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Kevin Hart

The Return

And there are always trees in the distance
weighing things up carefully like jurors—

they grow up through dreams, menace
only the young and childlike. Now look:

you hardly noticed that hill, turn
and see the city steaming beneath,

adjusting minutely to your absence.
Other things are harder. Your headlights

will seem to lead you on. See,
even this scene suggests itself:

a weekend flat, loitering along the coast,
where a smiling girl may be shedding

her blouse for a bearded local boy
reeking of *Brut* who watches, intent,

and slowly extinguishes his cigarette
before turning off the light. . . .

You are not always in control. The road
opens like a hand, will not let you go—

or worse, the hills clench into fists
as you pass, the dark races to catch up

past stumps of town with dreamtime names
parked by huge semi-trailers, resting

against huge men who watch you coming
and hurl their hollow cans into your path.

Then, before you know it, the men
relax into the horizon without fuss

while you remain, a moment, a hole
burning away into the distance that vanishes

and is of no further interest.
Your final hill advances and, as you shift

to third the morning swells with light
about the city you are entering,

faces part curtains, stare, demand
"Who are you? Why have you come?"

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R. S. Thomas

The Woman

So beautiful! God himself quailed
at her approach: the long body curved
like the horizon. Why had he made
her so? How would it be, she said,
leaning towards him, if, instead of
quarrelling over it, we divided it
between us? You can have all the credit
for its invention, if you will leave the ordering
of it to me.
He looked into her
eyes and saw far down the bones
of the generations that would navigate
by those great stars; but the pull of it
was too much. Yes, he thought, give me their minds'
tribute, and what they do with their bodies
is not my concern. He put his hand in his side
and drew out the thorn for the letting
of the ordained blood and touched her with
it. Go, he said. They shall come to you for ever
with their desire, and you shall bleed for them in return.

Gavin Ewart

The Lively Arts?

Bohemian Life goes on, the same as ever, untiringly.
"She threw a full bottle of wine at the wall!" they say, admiringly.
At the parties they all behave violently or insultingly.
"He poured his whisky all over her!" they say, exultingly.
"I love passionate people like that!" they say, adoringly.
But it follows a pattern (besides the waste of alcohol) really quite boringly.

In a bar with muzak once, I was told (unless I'm dreaming)
a neurotic wife said "If you don't turn that music off, I shall start screaming!"
and they didn't—and she did; it was high-pitched, very effective.
To deduce the chaos this caused, you don't need to be a detective.
But those parties! A critic in a corner is bringing his lunch up
and two poets are getting ready for a first-class punch-up.

In the Fifties once, a man introduced somebody as Dylan Thomas
(a pure mistake, in all good faith) and, without dotting i's or putting in commas,
this fellow clocked him—knocked him flat as a kipper.
He thought he was taking the micky. So begin to hunt for your glass slipper
and slip away before midnight, is my advice to the literate.
Avant-garde behaviour (when it's pissed) is never very considerate.

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NOTES & TOPICS

Señor Carrillo's Schism

By Hugh Thomas

SANTIAGO CARRILLO'S quarrel with the Soviet Union has now made headlines in the newspapers throughout the West. The unsubtlety of the Russian replies and Carrillo's own relaxed responses must be serving the cause of Spanish Communism well, both in Spain and abroad. It is important, therefore, to be certain what it is that the leader of the Spanish Communist Party is really saying, and what he is not. That is perfectly possible and easy since Carrillo's text *Eurocomunismo y Estado* is available to read.

The book first of all makes a definite break with the Soviet Union. Of course, that does not exclude the possibility that, at some time in the future, for tactical reasons and in circumstances which cannot now be foreseen, the quarrel may be patched up; but Carrillo has said so many unforgivable things about the present character of the Soviet régime that it is hard to imagine that he personally will ever be forgiven. For example, Carrillo has said in an interview on French television that "There is very little chance that Russian tanks will ever reach Spain to quash an experiment of the same kind [as Dubcek's] and . . . if they did the Spanish people would be ready to fight them." (*The Times*, 15 July 1977). Then in his book Carrillo tells us that in Russia "the new state which emerged from the Revolution was forced to create a new force of repression. And under Stalin that force ended up controlling everything." That was almost said by Khrushchev, but not quite; for, by implication at least, it criticises Lenin as well as Stalin. As for the present, Carrillo assures us that though the Russian state is not, of course, "a bourgeois state, neither is it an authentic workers' democracy." Furthermore, the arms race and the general conditions in the world "do not favour the transformation of the Soviet state into a State of workers' democracy."

> "A State in which the Army and the organs of authority have so great a role runs the risk of considering power as its prime object. It tends to convert ideology into an instrument of power."

Again in his interview on French television Carrillo has compared the relations between Russia and East Europe to "the friendship between a shark and a sardine."

In addition, Carrillo allows himself to criticise or at least comment freely about all the great names in the Communist theoretical tradition as well. He tells us—a fact which is obvious to those who try to read them without faith—that "the very Marxist texts themselves suffer from obscurities and even at times contradictions." After reminding us that Engels spoke of the shortly-to-be-expected "extinction of the State", Carrillo tells us that "in practice, things have turned out to be much more complicated."

In another passage, Carrillo makes the admission that, in the work of the German revisionist, Karl Kautsky, ". . . there are certain abstract reasonings . . . which . . . can seem reasonable." That is quite a big admission for a Communist. Lenin also receives some criticism on theoretical grounds, in addition to the one which I have mentioned above, when talking of the Soviet state: thus, we hear that Lenin was wrongly led "to underestimate and to belittle the general concept of democracy." To say that Lenin on two occasions at least, in *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky* and also in *State and Revolution,* spoke in "a confused manner" shows a refreshing willingness on Carrillo's part to think for himself. As he himself says, "we Communists have changed various points of view."

THUS IT IS OBVIOUS that "Carrilloismo", if not all of *Eurocomunismo*, has taken leave of a number of dogmas. That is surely excellent news. On the other hand, there is nothing in Carrillo's book which suggests that he has abandoned his general desire to achieve "*la transformación politico-sócial*" or his acceptance of the vocabulary of the old days in defining what that will mean: for example, "the defeat and the political and social displacement of the exploiting classes." But does that mean the disappearance of all private enterprise? Well, perhaps not immediately. We are told that we can expect "the co-existence of public and private forms of property during a long period" and that during "the stage of political and economic democracy prescribed in our programme which is not yet

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Socialism" there will still be recognition of "the role that is represented by private enterprise. . . ."

Well, that's all right so far as it goes, but the implication is clear: sooner or later, Don Santiago envisages a society in which "private enterprise" will disappear, being replaced by "national planification." Even indeed during the preliminary stage of continuing acceptance of private enterprise, those firms will be expected to collaborate in a national plan—"*planification racional y nacional.*" How long will this early stage last? We are not told. Perhaps though it will be as long as private industry of a sort survived in China (from 1950 until the cultural revolution of 1966); or perhaps as short as private industry lasted in Cuba (from the revolution of 1959 until 1968).

Clearly, then, Carrilloismo seems to fall far short of a recognition that capitalist dynamics have a substantial part to play in the achievement of the good life which he says he aspires to create, and will always have so. This is not simply a matter of private enterprise being important for securing that variety as well as quality of product which Europeans of the future will want to ensure—but because democratic freedoms, to which Carrillo says he is devoted, also need the whole array of private newspapers, advertising agencies, voluntary organisations dependent on gifts, and so on, which it has at present in the successful democratic societies. Capitalism should be constrained to make an effective contribution to the preservation of natural justice through fiscal means but anyone who envisages its complete disappearance is not making a contribution to the achievement or the maintenance of an open society.

In short, Santiago Carrillo has, at least in my opinion, made a number of important concessions about the basis of his Party programme; but I believe that he should consider making one or two more. Capitalist enterprise in Spain since 1945 has made a spectacular recovery from its apparently decayed state of the 1930s; and any fair-minded person must recognise surely that it rather than state enterprise has been responsible for the great growth in living standards that has characterised the countries of the West during this period (even if that fact has sometimes been forgotten because of the increase of corruption that has gone with it in some countries). In this respect, incidentally, Señor Carrillo goes less far than his most able and most frankly open-minded lieutenant, Ramón Tamames, who in his own most recent writings, appears to envisage the co-existence of private with public enterprise indefinitely.

There are one or two other points where the reader must raise his eyebrows when reading *Eurocomunismo y Estado*. For example, Carrillo very honestly tells us that

> "there was a time in which Communists were profoundly convinced that Trotsky and Trotskyism had transformed themselves into agents of Nazism" (p. 149).

Now, however, he admits that that was not so, and he adds about Andres Nin that

> "[Nin] was assassinated and did *not* try and flee to the enemy camp" (p. 151).

That admission had been made by him already, as a matter of fact, in his earlier book, *Demain Espagne* (published when Carrillo was still an exile in France). Yet even so he still speaks of the activities of the POUM and the friends of Durruti in May 1937 as a "putsch", an "armed putsch." That view cannot be sustained.

I also think that Santiago Carrillo is excessively pessimistic when he says that "those who demand a plural and parliamentary development" in places where "historically those institutions have never existed are crying for the moon. . . ." I cannot accept that. It may prove difficult to achieve effective democracy in certain Asian and African countries, but I do not believe that it is impossible. Most countries, even in Europe, have developed democracies only relatively recently; there have been new ones in the last

IL GIORNALE (Milan)

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generation in the Third World (Venezuela, India); and until someone invents a better or freer system people will look in the end (after many bitter experiences based on more sensational alternatives) to democracy as the only way to assure themselves of freedom from tyranny, of human rights unmolested by arbitrary power.

Letter from Germany

Of Murder & Secret Pleasures

"Is the Spirit of Death Abroad in the Land?"

SCRAWLED ON A wall at Göttingen University—"*Wer verurteilt Dregger?* (Who will pass the death sentence on Dregger?)." That question was the open threat to yet another leading West German political figure. It was only one of the cynical reactions to the murder of the West German Federal Attorney, Herr Siegfried Buback in April. A paper entitled *Provinz*, published in Wiesbaden, put Alfred Dregger, together with Franz-Josef Strauss and Horst Herold (head of the Federal Criminal Investigation Department), on a "list of traitors to the people (*Volksverräter*)" in which the first two names, those of the murdered jurists, Chief Justice Drenkmann and Buback, were crossed out. Eight years earlier, in 1969, the Union of German Student Organisations (*VOS*) published a first "black list" of West German "killer scientists." Do these things represent an escalation in threats of violence? What has changed since the hey-day of "Marcuse's children"?

Bitter struggles for power and ideological conflicts between Communist parties and groups refute the idea that all radicals and extremists, whether they toe the Moscow line or are deviant anarchists, act in accordance with an overriding plan carefully worked out on general-staff lines. However, their reaction to the murder of Buback shows that there is at least one point on which they agree, *i.e.* their hatred of parliamentary democracy, its "bourgeois" representatives and liberal institutions.

That is why they all described the assassinated Federal Attorney as "a murderer"; it's a bitter old German saw, *der Ermordete ist schuld.* The so-called *K* groups frankly expressed their pleasure at the murder, while the Socialist *Basisgruppen* in the universities expressed their approval with rather more reserve and discretion. "*Klammheimlich*" is the word that has almost become an Underground slogan. The ideologically orthodox—those who follow the line of the German Communist Party and Moscow, from the Spartakus Marxist Students'

TEN YEARS AGO *it was the Marxist philosopher Jürgen Habermas who in disagreement and disgust with the turn of events in West German student militance, spoke darkly of "Left Fascism." But the Fascists were killers—fanatics who didn't hesitate to indulge in foul murder—who reached for their revolvers readily and without conscience. Here, surely, were idealists, well-meaning young persons only trying to devote themselves to cultivate gentler and fairer ideals than were incorporated in post-War German and European society . . . .*

In June 1922 a fanatical right-wing group in Berlin (and in the gang was the young and promising writer, Ernst von Salomon) shot dead Walther Rathenau, the influential and cultivated German financier. In July 1977 a fanatical left-wing group in Frankfurt shot dead (the last bullet being fired a half-inch from his right temple) Jürgen Ponto, the Bundesrepublik's *most successful and intelligent younger banker.*

Are we dealing with a case, in Thomas Mann's phrase, of "transposed heads"? Has old German Right become new German Left? Ponto, like Rathenau, was only a "symbol", a "thing of a System", and was murdered by a gang led into his house by none other than his god-daughter, carrying roses. The Chief Justice of West Berlin, Günter von Drenkmann, was murdered at his front door on his birthday by ostensible congratulants. The Bundesrepublik's *Chief Prosecutor, Siegfried Buback, was gunned down (with chauffeur and bodyguard) by a sharp-shooter on a Suzuki motorcycle, a death mourned officially by the nation but openly "rejoiced in" by almost all the representatives of Germany's university students and by thousands of Marxist sectarians and revolutionary splinter-groups.*

Is there, as the author of the following report (he is an editor of the "Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung") asks, a spirit of death abroad in the land?

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Union (MSB) to Gremliza, the editor of *konkret*—expressed the same sentiment, if in rather more inverted terms; they said they had "no regrets" about Buback's murder. They all regard "capitalist productive relations" as organisational forms of a destructive force that is safeguarded by the "ideology factories" of "bourgeois power", above all the family, the school and the university as well as the churches, and also by the instruments of bourgeois domination, the machinery of justice, the police, and the army. They are all out to break this allegedly murderous force.

Differences of opinion only prevail about the method (*e.g.* the use of defensive counter-violence) and the timing. Hence the statement in the letter from 28 theology students to the prisoner Sonnenberg, captured in a shoot-out after suspicions that he was the assassin on the Suzuki which mowed down three people in Buback's car. They, too, are in political conflict with the "forces with which you also are involved", though they reject, on fine theological principles, "lethal violence." Evidently they do not reject violence, but only "lethal violence." Agreement with this letter was also expressed by 78 men and women, all Protestant theology students at Marburg.

THE LEFT expressed itself rather more freely after the wave of anarcho-Marxist terrorism in 1972. Under the headline "Counter-Violence?" the Frankfurt students' paper *Diskus* then said:

> "If we—unlike reformist groups such as the German Communist Party and the Young Socialists—base ourselves on the principle that a legal, parliamentary transformation of the capitalist-parliamentary system of government by a few owners of the means of production is not possible . . . still we agree with the [Baader-Meinhof] Red Army Fraction on the necessity of the armed struggle for the overthrow of capitalism. But if at the same time we proceed on the assumption that the socialist revolution cannot be a revolution from above . . . it means that the necessity of the armed struggle cannot be used to justify its correctness at any particular moment. In other words, the form of the revolutionary struggle is dependent on the prevailing economic and political conditions and the state of consciousness of the revolutionary subject, and the revolutionary subject is not a group of intellectuals but the proletariat." (*Heft* 3/4, 1972)

Thus: armed violence, including murder, is not a question of morality; it is justified if it is successful.

This view is reflected five years later in the reactions to the murder of Buback. It is not a matter of calling for assassination—in the old Cromwellian phrase, "Killing, not Murder." The attitudes to violence of the various radical Left and extremist groups in Germany today are reflected in the controversy about an article entitled "Buback, an Obituary" that appeared in the students' newspaper *Göttinger Nachrichten* (published by a Students Union, ASTA, which is financed by all students' fees). The following sentence has been widely quoted from it:

> "My immediate reaction, my 'disconcertedness' at the shooting down of Buback, is quickly described; I could not and did not (and do not) want to conceal a secret pleasure (*eine klammheimliche Freude*)."

The writer, who signed himself "*Mescalero*", does not want to conceal his pleasure because he is addressing students who, he knows, share his pleasure at the murder; and he obviously wants to let them know that he thinks as they do, but regards this pleasure as somewhat problematical. "But there is worse to come", Mescalero continues, feeling his way further into the world of ideas of his radical fellow-students.

> "For quite a time (like many of us) I took pleasure in operations of the armed fighters—I, who as a civilian had never handled a gun or exploded a bomb. I felt a bit of a thrill (*ein bisschen dran aufgegeilt*) whenever something blew up and the whole *chic* capitalist world together with its villains was put into a state of agitation. The things I should like to do in my day-dreams, but have never had the pluck to do. Now once again I have imagined I was with the armed fighters (*die bewaffnete Kämpfer*). . . ."

However, this can be interpreted as implying that the idea of violence perhaps gives radicals rather more pleasure in theory than in practice. Mescalero of Göttingen skirts round this notion as follows:

> "I ask myself how I would reach a decision with my people on such an operation. I think about how I should have to accustom myself for months to the idea that Buback must be got rid of, how all my thinking would have to be dominated by logistics and ballistics, how I could be certain that this man and no other must die, how I should have to accept the possibility that someone else might be killed as well. . . ."

Mescalero goes on to ask whether Buback was the right target only because he had more public responsibility than others.

> "Why a politics of personalities? Could we not for once abduct a cook and see how the honourable democrats would react? Should we not in general concentrate more on cooks?"

The writer's emotional uncertainty is revealed by his mixing up two ideological notions here. The first is that we radicals might degrade the cook into a *Werkzeug*, a mere tool, in order to demonstrate that the "ruling class" would not bother about her if she were kidnapped. The second evidently elevates the woman into a

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subject, standing for the Workers; according to this notion, we radicals must be guided by the state of "consciousness (*Bewusstsein*)" of the workers; they are not yet as mentally or ideologically advanced as we are, and we can resort to violence only when they (*die dummen Köchinnen*, these stupid cooks) want it. The hubris of left-wing fanatics has seldom been so plainly expressed as in this paragraph about cooks.

BUT THIS ARROGANCE—*Besserwisserei* is our German word for it—is widespread among radicals, whether they tend to the orthodoxy of the German Communist Party or to the anarchism of the writer of the Göttingen obituary. They are all motivated by the idea of having to act on behalf of popular masses who have not yet seen the light. The idea of "individual terror" is only one variation on this theme. The usual variation is Lenin's view (stated in his *What Is To Be Done?*) that the Communist Party must first educate the proletariat, which is not by itself able to find its way to a scientifically-based class-consciousness.

However, not only the orthodox but the great majority of German left-wing radicals deny that individual terror can bring about a revolution and abolish the hateful "System." Without the workers, they believe, the "System" cannot be overthrown. Hence individual terror is rejected for tactical rather than moral reasons. To this extent Mescalero is in complete harmony with the classical left-wing radical line when he states that "disposing of . . . an official government-authorised killer" in Argentina or Spain would be quite a different thing. In those countries, he believes,

> "the people's hatred of those figures is really popular hatred. But who and how many people had a (mortal) hatred of Buback? . . . We must give up hating the oppressors of the people vicariously for the people itself. . . . If Buback was not a victim of popular anger (or, if you like, of class hatred, so that no false suspicion should arise), the violence thus exercised comes from the people as little as Buback's own violence came from them."

The phrase about giving up vicarious hatred is highly significant. What follows? Does it mean that we radicals must not hate the oppressors of the people but, perhaps, the People themselves for having failed to hate their oppressors? If this is not merely a clumsy misstatement, it expresses the left-wing fanatics' feeling of being isolated from the People in whose name they so ardently wish to act. Or was the writer only trying to say that the People must hate for themselves, for it is not enough to have deputies for their class emotions?

This article plainly shows that there are "terrorists of thought" as well as "terrorists of the deed." The Mescaleros are, of course, an Apache tribe. The Göttingen Mescaleros see themselves as Red Indians fighting the "White Man", the alleged beneficiary of our social system.

THE AUTHOR OF THE Göttingen obituary also describes himself as a member of the so-called Movement of the Undogmatic Spring which, together with the "Socialist Alliance", forms the Göttingen ASTA. Is he referring to these groups when he states that "many of us" approved of the action of the terrorists? Or is he thinking of his like-minded friends in the Communist groups? The West German Communist League (*KBW*) and the Bremen Group of Spartakus claim that the Göttingen ASTA is dominated by nothing less than the Communist League (*KB*) North. This accords with indications from other universities that this *K*-group has succeeded in penetrating some of the *Basis* groups. It is noteworthy that in all the universities it has been the *KB* that has called on student organisations to reprint the Göttingen article on Buback (and it has been widely reprinted).

A LONG TIME AGO, *i.e.* as long as 1968, the once-famous Cohn-Bendit brothers, in their book *Left-Wing Radicalism* ("a drastic remedy for the senile diseases of Communism"), called for a pluralistic revolution. They were for an anarchistical spontaneity:

> "We do not want to be *the* organisation of the revolutionary movement. We want rather to create a multiplicity of revolutionary centres, whether these are ideological groups, groups in specific institutions, or gangs of 'leather jackets' who politicise their actions by radical questioning of atomised life. . . ."

Thus, militant groups all have their place in left-wing anarchist pluralism, but they must not be allowed to dominate. In a number of Germany's *Basis* groups this has already happened. This endangers the Cohn-Bendit principle that the revolutionary struggle must be a game in which everyone must be free to play. This notion implies that the more that take part, the more playful the forms taken by violence could be; the Revolution would indeed be a "festival." At all events, that is what the socialist sect of so-called "*spontis*" believe; and so does the writer of the Buback obituary, who proposes to develop a theory and practice of violence and militancy that would be merry and would enjoy "the blessing of the concerned masses."

The line of the Communist League (*KB*) is more blatant. A leaflet put out by the Frankfurt

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group contains the following sentence under the headline "WE MOURN FOR A GREAT SWINE":

> "Are we to forbid ourselves pleasure at the death of Herr B.? (Honestly, is there a man or a woman anywhere who was not delighted?) . . . ."

Its journal, *Solidarität* (No. 38, 1977), notes—under the provocative title "NEVERTHELESS WE LAUGH"—that as a result of the "frankly expressed satisfaction at Buback's death" the question of violence has lost its "terrifying effect (*Schreckeffekt*)" among broad sections of the Left. It continues:

> "The Brokdorf and Grohnde operations [demonstrations against German nuclear-energy plants] have not for the last time given the ruling forces cause to appreciate the results and the enormous politicisation into the movement by this question. . . ."

The *KB* states that the Göttingen ASTA supports the "movement" against the construction of nuclear power stations "with all its strength." Indeed some non-Communist student groups have asked whether it "actually helped to finance the civil-war manoeuvre at Grohnde." A few thousand D-marks here and there is always useful.

The "joy" in violence is also escalated by competition between the *KB* and the *KBW*, each of which tries to show it is the most militant. This is illustrated by the controversy over the Buback obituary as well as by the riotous events at Brokdorf and Grohnde. In the *Kommunistische Volkszeitung* of 6 June the *KBW* accuses the *KB* and the Göttingen ASTA of "pacifist cant." It says that the Buback obituary specifically repudiated political murder.

> "Many students ask whether the bourgeois State can be destroyed. It cannot be destroyed if people are relied on who open the prayer book and read out the 'rights of man' from the ASTA pulpit. But it must be destroyed. . . ."

THOSE WHO OPENLY AND EXPLICITLY defend political murder form a minority even in the extremist splinter groups. But they exist. In their April *info* the "Berlin Undogmatic Groups" (BUG) call for "many more Bubacks" (along the line of the old cry to create "more Viet Nams"). They justify their call to murder as follows:

> "Revolutionary struggle cannot be conducted legally because in legality adaptation to the dominant rules-of-the-game necessarily prevails. Hence practical resistance is possible only in illegality."

A similar mentality is reflected in a poster at Frankfurt University with the jingle:

> *Drenkmann war das erste Schwein,*
> *Buback kam gleich hinterdrein.*
>
> (Drenkmann was the first pig,
> Buback followed close behind him)

At Göttingen University the following jingles were scrawled on a wall (before, it should be noted, the murder in July of Jürgen Ponto):

> *Der Bubeck-Spuk ist jetzt vorbei,*
> *Wir legen nun ein neues Ei!*
>
> (The Bubeck affair is over now,
> We shall be laying another egg presently)

OF ALL THE Communist splinter parties the German Communist Party and its student organisation, the Spartakus Marxist Students' League, most sharply condemn such "infantile" militant statements. They do not exclude the possibility, as Karl Marx in London did not, that the socialist society to which they aspire might be attainable by legal means; but even the Spartacists are not as meekly "legalistic" as they were a few years ago. That is because the radicalised *Basis* groups were surprisingly successful at the last elections of the various West German student parliaments. To prevent the Left from further alienating itself from the *DKP* and degenerating into "adventurous individualism", the Spartakus movement is taking a more radical stand than it used to.

The sharper tone adopted by the Communists who remain loyal to Moscow is illustrated by the stratagem to which they resorted at the beginning of their discussion of the murder of Buback. Gremliza simultaneously used it in *konkret* and so did the Spartakus organisation in its *roten blätter*; in fact it is borrowed from the propaganda arsenal of the militant anarchists. After the bombing of the Axel Springer publishing house in 1972 the Frankfurt group of the *KB* announced in a leaflet that no left-wing group was really responsible for this act of terrorism. The *KB* could not go so far as to claim that the West German security authorities had placed the bomb "by direct order", because after all it could produce no concrete evidence of this. "But the whole circumstances of the operation and previous experiences of the working-class movement" (here the *KB* is perhaps referring to a similar claim made by the anarchist assassin, Emile Henry) "justify suspicion in that direction. . . ." To substantiate this suspicion an alleged agent of the security service in Berlin was mentioned who, it claimed, had placed parcels containing bombs in comrades' homes so that the police should find them there and thus be able to "demonise the Left."

This kind of argument was taken over five years later by Gremliza of *konkret* and the *roten blätter*, and even the Spartakus organisation relied on the same old alleged Berlin

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provocateur. To avoid possible prosecution *konkret* and the *roten blätter* withdrew the allegation, but less caution has been shown in their leaflets. In one handbill issued jointly by Spartakus, the Socialist University Alliance, and the Young Socialist University group, the statement is made:

> "There are enough instances that show that the ruling class does not shrink from making political martyrs in its own ranks to take advantage of the resulting climate of opinion to further the abolition of democratic rights. . . ."

The Spartakus movement said in a Bonn leaflet:

> "It can be taken as pretty certain that Buback was murdered by 'real' anarchists. But the timing, the political function, *etc.* of the crime suggests that the guardians of the State had their finger in the pie. Ultimately the question is a relative one. Whether actual members of the staff of the Office for the Protection of the Constitution were responsible or whether they were petty-bourgeois easy-riders who believed themselves to be called on to be anarchists, the function of both is to promote the destruction of democratic rights. . . ."

Elsewhere the *KB* had its own line of argument thrust back at it—it was suspected of having itself aided and abetted the security authorities! This was only more evidence of the absurd extremes of the internecine rivalry among radical Left groups.

They all agree, however, that (at any rate at that particular moment) the murder was, if not a crime, then a political mistake. It only benefited their class enemies because the latter exploited popular indignation at the killing to restrict freedom on the Left. Finally, and here they are monolithic, there is unanimity in the moral and political condemnation of West German late capitalism, "private property", *etc., etc.* Gremliza states point-blank in *konkret* that it is a "rapacious, misanthropic society" that is guilty of carrying out "systematic murder" (at the factory for instance).

WHO, THEN—or what—was responsible for the murder on the streets of Karlsruhe? They all attribute the moral guilt for Buback's murder to that sociological catch-all, namely "social conditions." At the same time—such is the power of dialectics—Buback, as a representative of the so-called rapaciously exploitative society, is somehow regarded as having been actually responsible for his own murder. Gremliza, therefore, calls on his readers not to be diverted from the struggle against the murderous society "by a State funeral for a dead public prosecutor." The Spartakus organisation dutifully adds that there is nothing to add to this; like the *KB*, it condemns the statement scornfully quoted by Gremliza that "he who does not grieve is an enemy of the State."

The phrase was grotesquely turned in the headline of a handbill published in Bremen—"*He who does not grieve is an Accomplice: he who rejoices is a Terrorist.*" The local ASTA group consists of Spartakus, the SHB, and the Young Socialist University Group, and their handbill says:

> "Independently of one's attitude to acts of political violence such as the execution of Buback, the idea of preventing discussion of such questions by a State-ordered time of mourning must be decisively rejected. . . ."

Then the notorious Göttingen obituary on Buback is appended to this. The Bremen ASTA has now claimed that this handbill is a *KB* forgery, because the word "execution (*Hinrichtung*)" which forms part of the left-Communist vocabulary but not that of right-Spartakus, suggests that it is a falsification. If only a single word can define policies and ideologies, it is evident why in the world of Left sectarianism confusions are so frequent. Could even a Marxist Council of Nicaea resolve these murderous semantic ambiguities?

IF IT WERE NOT for the corpses, it might all appear to be an unreal play of words. Thus the much-celebrated poet, Erich Fried (famed for his modern translations of Shakespeare into German), wrote in a poem, "On the Death of Buback", that

> *Es wäre besser gewesen, so ein Mensch hätte nie gelebt.*
>
> (It would have been better if such a man had never lived.)

He now says, having sent out the text from London to all his sympathetic Left editors in West Germany, that the line should have read

> It would have been better if a man had not lived in such a way.
>
> *Es wäre besser gewesen, ein Mensch hätte nicht so gelebt.*

Could it really be that on each of the radical left-wing student journals that published Erich Fried's verses there was a secret agent of the Office for the Protection of the Constitution entrusted with the special task of transposing the word "*such*"?

So-oder-so there was the spirit of death abroad on the Left.

Kurt Reumann

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The Heresy of Naturalism

Some Notes on Structure in Anthony Powell—By HILARY SPURLING

"READING NOVELS NEEDS almost as much talent as writing them" is a favourite saying of X. Trapnel's, and one perhaps specially appropriate to the work in which he figures. For one could hardly find a clearer demonstration of what Trapnel himself calls "the heresy of naturalism" than Anthony Powell's sequence of 12 novels in which, for the reader, the deepest satisfaction comes less from character and incident than from the structure that supports them both: a structure so contrived that, as it flows, straggles or jerks itself along, by turns farcical and grim, sombre, tumultuous, absurd, reaching out through almost infinite varieties of egotism to embrace the furthest shores of crankiness and melancholia, it seems not so much to shape as to contain the disorderly process of life itself. It is not for nothing that Powell's narrator, Nicholas Jenkins, takes his first name from that specialist in rhythm and design, Nicolas Poussin, whose painting provides both the title and the model for *A Dance to the Music of Time*.

Time, in that painting, smiles a sinister smile as well he may considering that in life and art he has the upper hand. In fiction, or at least in this particular fiction, Time is to the writer what Space is to the painter. Time may be empty or so densely packed that the reader can barely take in more than a few sample details in a hectic corner of the canvas. Time may dawdle or work fast, stretching forward or doubling back to shift a perspective, change an angle, open up one vista, close another, superimpose a further twist on a design already loaded or tweak skew-whiff a whole connecting system of supports. It is Time who disposes of the characters, causing them to topple and collide, tangle, scatter and regroup in new and unexpected couplings. Almost any character will serve to illustrate Time's role. Take, for instance, Milly Andriadis who gives the party in *A Buyer's Market* at which Jenkins first sets foot in that chilly, grasping, power-conscious, adult world which will from now on insistently claim his attention.

In the first place, the party is not approached head on but through the disapproving eyes of Uncle Giles who (supposing he were present, which he isn't) would undoubtedly take the gravest exception to his hostess. She herself seems to Jenkins, still largely conventional if increasingly dissatisfied in outlook, only one of many imponderables following one another too close for comfort in the course of a single, eventful midsummer night: "we came suddenly upon Mrs Andriadis herself, when a further, and enormous, field of speculation was immediately projected into being." Such stray facts as may be gleaned about her character and history are conveyed by various people in vastly different tones of voice—Mr Deacon's inquisitive but suspicious, Sillery's faintly critical, David Pennistone's sardonic, Barnby's not untinged by a sense of competition. To Dicky Umfraville, whose view we learn later, Mrs Andriadis is simply part of the furniture of his own distant, and doubtless murky youth. For her current lover, Charles Stringham, she is already beginning to take on the oppressive lineaments of the two formidable women, his mother and Miss Weedon, whose toils he will never entirely manage to escape. To Jenkins (too bemused to register for several months her resemblance to Stringham's mother and Miss Weedon), she is an enigma, but one which gradually recedes in the later stages of that summer as he moves towards his own decision to settle for the world of the imagination rather than of power. In time she will become a feature of the landscape so unremarkable that when, twenty or thirty years later, she comes to an inevitable bad end, the event itself can be inferred only from casual asides let slip in conversation about other more absorbing topics. But, however modified by hindsight, she will always retain something of the intensity of that first encounter when she seemed a kind of Circe, presiding (as Madame Leroy had done earlier at La Grenadière and Mrs Erdleigh will do a few years later) over a crucial junction in Jenkins's career. Her Hill Street party is the hinge on which *A Buyer's Market* turns, and—together with that other memorable gathering at her Park Lane flat in *The Acceptance World*—provides one of the character friezes of furious activity which punctuate the first of the four movements of the dance.

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None of this has, strictly speaking, any place in her *curriculum vitae*. And yet to approach Mrs Andriadis as a character in her own right is to strip her of her single most essential function as a strand in the overall pattern of the sequence. It is much as though one were to describe, say, the sharply individual figure of Eve in Correggio's *Assumption of the Virgin* at Parma without once mentioning that, because she is painted in a tilted perspective on the slanting side of a circular dome eighty feet above the ground, her head is severely foreshortened, her features flattened, her left, apple-bearing forearm massively enlarged and her body invisible from the waist down; while at the same time one failed to take account of her dominant position—slightly above the Virgin, below Christ and facing Adam—in the heaving mass of some fifty Old and New Testament characters, thirty or forty angels and innumerable putti who simultaneously jostle, conceal and support her, all scrambling for a purchase on one another's heads, shoulders and frantically flailing limbs, all enclosed within the harmonious contours of Correggio's master plan.

ONE MIGHT FIND a parallel case of this foreshortening, brought about by Time rather than Space, in the magician, Dr Trelawney, whose uncomfortable presence in the second half of *The Music of Time* makes an impact out of all proportion to his actual appearances. We see him face to face only twice, both times in a far from flattering light. He turns up first as a harmless local crackpot running the kind of cult fashionable before the First World War from a gabled villa near the Jenkinses' at Stonehurst. A conspicuous bearded figure in biblical garments, often to be seen out running across the heather with a flock of disconsolate disciples trailing in his wake, he makes a slightly queasy impression on Mrs Jenkins, haunts her son's dreams at night and is politely but firmly sent packing by General Conyers. When next encountered, washed up in a dingy room at the Bellevue a quarter of a century later, he is even less impressive: an ageing semi-invalid, with stained beard and yellow teeth, who has long since become an embarrassment to the management on account of his reluctance to pay his bills, his disobliging attitude to other residents and his habit of getting himself locked in the bathroom at all hours of the night. On this occasion he receives his quietus from Mrs Erdleigh with a hypodermic syringe, administered behind locked doors as his prophecies of doom—"The slayer of Osiris once again demands his grievous tribute of blood. The Angel of Death will ride the storm. . . . The Four Horsemen are at the gate . . ."—degenerate into demented screechings.

In the interval between these two manifestations, which come towards the beginning and end of *The Kindly Ones*, Jenkins has learnt a thing or two from the doctor's fellow Simple Lifer, Mr Deacon (who confirms that, for all his talk of Oneness and the Vision of Visions healing the Blindness of Sight, Trelawney's eye is more firmly on the ball than most when it comes to extracting funds from the faithful, or keeping his disciples on starvation rations); and at second hand from Moreland (who casts light on some rather more sinister proceedings in a necromantic career verging on the criminal). But neither these reports, nor his own taste for cabbalistic dialectic, sufficiently account for Trelawney's palpably unsavoury ambience. Nor is it simply that Jenkins himself is peculiarly susceptible to dabblers in the Black Arts ("I had become increasingly aware of his pervasive, quasi-hypnotic powers, possessed to a greater or lesser degree by all persons—not necessarily connected with occultism—who form little cults devoted primarily to veneration of themselves"). What gives Trelawney a stature not fully warranted by the incomplete, sometimes obscure outlines of his portrait may partly be his relationship to two figures more solidly planted in the novel's foreground, General Conyers and Mrs Erdleigh, each of whom accords him a surprising measure of respect. But the foreshortening effect comes still more from his own position in *The Kindly Ones*, the novel which concludes the first half of the sequence and, of all twelve volumes, covers the widest and most convoluted span of time.

The crowded afternoon on which Trelawney first showed up (it was the day on which the Jenkinses' cook gave notice, the Conyerses came to lunch, the parlourmaid appeared naked in the drawing room and Uncle Giles chose to arrive out of the blue) was also the day in 1914 on which Archduke Franz Ferdinand was assassinated at Sarajevo—a fact to which the reader's attention is drawn in language strongly reminiscent of Trelawney: "No one yet realised that the Mute with the Bowstring stood at the threshold of the door, that, if they wanted to get anything done in time of peace, they must be quick about it." He appears for the second and last time on the day in 1939 when Russia and Germany signed their non-aggression pact:

> When the sword of Mithras—to borrow Dr Trelawney's phrase—flashed at last from its scabbard, people supposed London would immediately become the target of bombs. However, the slayer of Osiris did not at first demand his grievous tribute of blood, and a tense, infinitely uneasy overall stagnation imposed itself upon an equally uncomfortable, equally febrile, overall activity.

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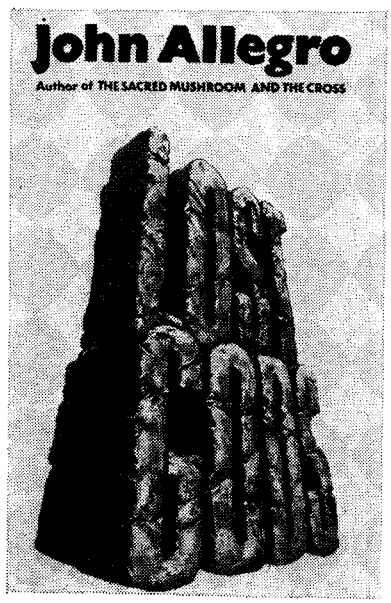

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In each case Trelawney becomes in retrospect a harbinger of war, a figure who gathers to himself the atmosphere of impending catastrophe which pervades *The Kindly Ones*, and who will continue to loom ominously over deaths, dislocations and fresh groupings long after his corporeal body has, in Mrs Erdleigh's words, "re-entered the Vortex of Becoming." Another quarter of a century later, in the last volume of *The Music of Time*, Trelawney's theories will return to vogue among the cult followers of the late 1960s—an achievement to which Jenkins gives ungrudging recognition: "It was Dr Trelawney's view—also that of his old friend and fellow occultist, Mrs Erdleigh—that death was no more than transition, blending, synthesis, mutation. To be fair to them both, they seemed to some extent to have made their point." It is characteristic of the structural complexity of the whole sequence that, in addition to what one might call his surrealistic role, Trelawney remains not only entirely plausible in naturalistic terms—as an ambitious, unscrupulous and exceptionally shrewd mountebank—but also one of the most undilutedly comic characters in fiction.

INDEED, NOT the least disconcerting thing about *The Music of Time* is precisely its humourous tone. Jenkins himself notes at one point that Shakespeare found it necessary to alternate tragedy with comedy largely because people in everyday life will insist on acting without due regard for procedure; and any reader of Jenkins' own narrative will find again and again that events which seemed hilariously funny at the time become steadily less so in retrospect. A case in point is the scene at the Huntercombes' ball when Barbara Goring drenched Widmerpool with sugar: a surprise attack still sharply etched on Jenkins' imagination thirty years and nine volumes later, on the climactic night in Regent's Park when Pamela Widmerpool mounts her final spectacular assault upon her husband. Other obvious examples are Mrs Foxe's party for Moreland's symphony at which revelations and reversals follow one another with the speed of farce; Sir Magnus Donners' Seven Deadly Sins tableaux at Stourwater a few years later; even the notorious affair of Braddock alias Thorne at school—an escapade which, as it turns out, marks the high point for Stringham whose fortunes afterwards spiral inexorably downwards. Humour in short can go to almost any lengths, given that it works in conjunction with Jenkins's constant awareness of "the tricks Time can play within its own folds, tricks that emphasise the insecurity of those who trust themselves over much to that treacherous concept."

The combination governs every part of the design, above all the long series of jolts which make up Jenkins's relationship with Widmerpool. But it can be seen perhaps most clearly in the career of such a relatively minor figure as Stringham's stepfather, the polo-playing sailor, Lieutenant-Commander Buster Foxe. Handsome, indolent, pin-headed, a natty dresser slightly younger than his wealthy wife, Buster belongs to a P. G. Wodehouse world of 'twenties chic, revolving round fast cars, country houses, smart golf courses and yachting at Cowes. But he also has a less amiable aspect, immediately apparent when Jenkins first sets eyes on him during a visit to Stringham's home from school in the Christmas holidays of 1922:

> Buster was . . . cleaning a cigarette-holder with the end of a match-stick. He was tall, and at once struck me as surprisingly young. . . . His turn-out was emphatically excellent, and he diffused waves of personality, strong, chilling gusts of icy air, a protective element that threatened to freeze into rigidity all who came through the door, before they could approach him nearer.
>
> "Hullo, you fellows", he said, without looking up from his cigarette-holder, at which he appeared to be sneering, as if this object were not nearly valuable enough to presume to belong to him.

Stringham, as Jenkins later learns from Dicky Umfraville, loathes Buster's guts; their rivalry supplies a minor theme in *A Question of Upbringing*, provisionally resolved in victory for Stringham. It runs underground for the next three volumes in which Buster disappears from view (though we hear of him from time to time growing fatter, falling out of favour with his wife, taking slimming cures at Tring), only to surface again in foul play at Mrs Foxe's party in *Casanova's Chinese Restaurant* which ends with game, set and match to Buster. But the origins of this feud are disclosed only long afterwards by Buster's old enemy Umfraville, telling the ghastly story of his life and incidentally of Buster's marriage in *The Valley of Bones*. So that it is not until well into the second half of the sequence that the reader is at last in a position to unravel the tensions sensed by Jenkins as a schoolboy on that first morning when Buster, temporarily outflanked by Stringham, went off to ply with hock at Claridge's a man from whom he hoped to buy a Bentley awfully cheap.

Jenkins's attitude to Buster is of course largely coloured by loyalty to Stringham, and by the impression of strain Stringham always gives, whether as a dissident schoolboy, a debauchee in search of ever more exotic haunts of vice, a reprieved alcoholic or on his last appearance as a mess waiter in the Second World War. Uneasiness in Buster's presence changes to horror at his

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part in Stringham's disintegration, itself a prototype of the lives of other romantics—Roland Gwatkin, X. Trapnel, to some extent Hugh Moreland—shipwrecked in the gulf between their dreams and an obdurate reality. The same horror deepens and darkens Jenkins's view of Widmerpool (Stringham's butt at school, later indirectly responsible for Stringham's death in a Japanese prisoner-of-war camp, ultimately destroyed by his marriage to Stringham's niece, Pamela Flitton). Whatever the underlying cause of Stringham's troubles—a Hamlet-like temperament exacerbated by his mother's domination, by Buster's machinations, perhaps by the wrongs of his own divorced father—there can be no doubt that they exert a powerfull pull on the whole structure of *The Music of Time*: so much so that it is something of a shock when the reader realises on looking back that, as a friend, Stringham has effectively dropped out of Jenkins's life by the end of the first volume. His disillusionment, his captivating liveliness, his melancholy wit are already so securely established that, though from now on he appears at greater intervals—and falls out altogether just over half way through the sequence—large stretches of the action will take place in his shadow.

If Stringham is one of several characters who define the basic framework, others, more often heard than seen, serve so to speak as filters, constantly available to change the lighting of a particular scene or modulate from one incident to another years before or still to come. One thinks of Umfraville's urbane epithets ("Buster's a contemporary of mine", said Umfraville, "a son-of-a-bitch in the top class"), Peter Templer's equally pithy turn of phrase, Chips Lovell's gossip, even the grousings of Uncle Giles. Barnby (who starts laying down the law on women some hundred and fifty pages before the reader has the faintest notion who he is, and whose voice continues to make itself heard long after his death in a wartime plane crash) falls into this category, and so does Moreland, whose gradual withdrawal and eventual departure from the scene remove a whole layer of colouring from Jenkins's narrative.

INDEED JENKINS HIMSELF may be seen in much the same way, as a convenient device for the adjustment of perspective. It is a device especially noticeable at the beginning of the sequence, where behaviour and events which caused Jenkins no small perplexity at the time—Mrs Andriadis' Hill Street party is one of many instances—are more clearly scrutinised in the light of an understanding arrived at only many years later. It means that the reader sees much of the action in the early volumes as it were in double focus, through the eyes of the narrator and simultaneously through the eyes of his naïve younger self: a character hopelessly out of his depths in matters like sex, power and the literary life, equally at sea in his estimate of other people's motives, for ever stubbing his toe on mysteries he is unable to resolve, developments he hadn't anticipated, problems with which he can't begin to cope. The flexibility of this multiple approach is plain in the case of someone like the novelist, St John Clarke, to whom Jenkins's attitude veers through four successive phases (initial dislike, succeeded by a kind of adolescent infatuation which gives way first to the extreme intolerance of youth, later to a more complex mistrust), any or all of which may be called into play at a given moment in the narrative.

It is also perhaps worth noting that there is one unique element in this particular portrait, arising from Jenkins's account of the novelist's work: a technical analysis which in itself amounts to a short course in the art of writing as instructive as it is diverting. St John Clarke's novels are characterised by "inexactitudes of thought and feeling", "windy descriptive passages, two-dimensional characterisation and . . . the emptiness of the writing's inner content"; their style is "inept" and "outworn"; they are "trivial, unreal, vulgar", "odiously phrased and 'insincere' "; moreover they are slipshod in construction. The very thought of them moves Jenkins by turns to "savagery" and nausea, reactions altogether different from his lenient appraisal of the work of other artists who fall into roughly the same low category, notably the painters Edgar Deacon, Horace Isbister and Daniel Tokenhouse. As a man St John Clarke may inspire pangs of pity (and once at least a certain reluctant fellow feeling) but not as an author. Even Widmerpool at his most repulsive comes in for nothing comparable to the ruthless and sustained contempt of this purely professional castigation.

Jenkins writes somewhere that he takes a "hard, cold-blooded, almost mathematical pleasure" in writing and painting. The reverse side of this pleasure is his attitude to Clarke's novels, a rejection framed according to the uncompromising laws of an aesthetic rather than moral or emotional system. It strikes a note not heard elsewhere in a work devoted to exploring, in all their painful and preposterous diversity, the workings of that general rule laid down at a fairly early stage in *The Music of Time*: "All human beings, driven as they are at different speeds by the same Furies, are at close range equally extraordinary."

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Taking the Law Unseriously

Dworkin's Rights & Wrongs—By SHIRLEY ROBIN LETWIN

PROFESSOR RONALD DWORKIN has written a book to persuade us to take "rights" seriously.[1] What he means is that we ought to recognise that serious legal decisions are political decisions and should therefore be made in accordance with what judges perceive to be right rather than with existing law.

Those who take "law" seriously will find this thesis all the more striking because Professor Dworkin describes his book as a new theory of law, a "liberal" theory. He offers it as an alternative to what he calls the "ruling" theory, which he says is positivism, and which he finds best exemplified in the work of H. L. A. Hart, his predecessor as Professor of Jurisprudence at Oxford. In fact, Professor Dworkin is doing much more. Whether or not positivism is the "ruling" theory —a question that would be difficult to answer— there are undoubtedly many other influential theories of law. And Dworkin himself concedes this when he names opponents of positivism such as Burke and Hayek. He might have mentioned others who are well known, such as Lon Fuller of Harvard and Edward H. Levi of Chicago, or Michael Oakeshott of the London School of Economics. Though Dworkin suggests that all such opponents of positivism must be allies of his, their conception of law is much closer to positivism than to his own. For Dworkin attacks positivism in a manner that constitutes a denial of all the basic ideas of the rule of law.

Dworkin launches his attack on positivism at what is certainly its Achilles' heel. The positivists have not succeeded in explaining what bearing the justice of law has on its validity, or why there can be disagreement among lawyers and judges about how a given case at law should be decided. The first weakness of positivism has inspired a revival of interest in natural law, which is taken to provide criteria for judging the justice of a law and for explaining the relation between a law's validity and its justness. The second weakness of positivism was seized on by the Realist school of jurisprudence, which argued that since there can be disagreement about how the existing law should be interpreted in a particular case, it can only be decided by in effect making a new law. Although Ronald Dworkin does not mention the Realists (who flourished at Yale where he taught before coming to Oxford) and claims that his theory is a new variation on natural law theory, his "liberal" theory is rather a restatement of the standard Realist argument that judges necessarily do, and should, legislate. But whereas the Realists said bluntly that judges should promote good social engineering, Dworkin says that judges sometimes do, and always should, decide in accordance with the recognised moral standards of the community.

IT MIGHT SEEM THAT no good man could resist Dworkin's recommendation that judges should take into account "the sense of community", "substantive justice", and "rights." But there is more to Dworkin's argument which makes it not quite so innocuous.

In effect he argues his thesis in the following way. A legal rule is one, but only one, of the many forms that the moral standards accepted by the community may take. As legal rules are pertinent to legal decisions, accepted moral standards must also be. Therefore, judges may as legitimately base their decisions on accepted moral standards or "rights" as on legal rules. This would seem to be equivalent to the argument that because Socrates is a man, therefore all men are Socrates. How does Dworkin attempt to make so simple a logical fallacy into a convincing argument? By presenting it as though it were merely an implication of two widely accepted beliefs—that there is some relation between law and morality, and that legal decisions have the same logical form as all practical decisions. Just how Dworkin manages to associate his thesis with these beliefs is worth noticing.

IT SHOULD BE NOTICED first of all that, apart from a few such as Hans Kelsen, the inventor of the "pure" theory of law, jurists have not denied (as Dworkin suggests they do) that there is a relationship between law and morality. H. L. A. Hart carefully considers it throughout *The Concept of Law* (1961), and elsewhere. What divides jurists is how that relationship should be understood.[2]

Dworkin bases his claim to be making a new discovery about the dependence of law on morality on his use of the "logical" distinction between "rules" and "principles" in the law. He defines a "rule" as a proposition that produces indis-

[1] *Taking Rights Seriously*. By RONALD DWORKIN. Duckworth, £9.80; Harvard University Press, $12.

[2] See my "Morality & the Law", ENCOUNTER November 1974).

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putable decisions, in contrast to a "principle", which states moral standards which can be interpreted in different ways. This might appear to be, as Dworkin suggests it is, a clarification of accepted ideas about the law because judges and jurists do talk of "principles" and "rules." But they use the distinction to describe the difference between two levels of abstraction, so that although rules are less abstract than principles, they are propositions of the same logical sort, and both are indeterminate in relation to particular instances. In other words, Dworkin has made a distinction without a difference. And this vitiates also his distinction between "hard" and "easy" cases which is central to his argument.

That Ronald Dworkin misunderstands the logical character of rules is evident from the fact that he not only ignores, but violates the logical distinction between "rules" and "orders", which really is crucial to understanding the concept of law. An *order* tells a particular person to perform a particular action. But a *rule* prescribes norms of conduct by describing classes of persons, things, acts, or circumstances. The fact that *rules* are general propositions about the conditions for lawful conduct makes them indeterminate. This is because things in the real world come with different assortments of characteristics, and there is no way of establishing irrefutably whether any particular assortment fits within the class named by the rule. The problem appears when, for instance, given a rule that drunken drivers shall be fined, it has to be decided whether a drunken man sleeping in the driver's seat of a parked car is a "drunken driver."

Dworkin's confusion of laws with orders might escape notice because the interpretation of some rules at some times goes undisputed; and in such cases adjudication need concern itself only with ascertaining the "facts"—whether, for instance, Mr Smith was exceeding the given speed limit. But such agreement only conceals the fact that the rule has been interpreted; it does not signify that there was no need for interpretation. And even in "easy" cases (as Dworkin calls them) there may be doubt about how to treat the fact that Mr Smith is a doctor racing to rescue a dying patient. Most rules of law, in any event, are far more complicated than traffic regulations. Moreover all rules of law are part of a system of rules which means that there may be uncertainty about which rules are relevant to a case or how to resolve conflicts among rules. Such indeterminacy is not a defect in the law but unavoidable in any system of law because it follows from the logical character of rules. It is besides the great asset of the law. For law can secure stable expectations only because new and unforeseen circumstances can be recognised as instances of an established rule.

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In other words, the indeterminacy and the stability that are attached to the law are two sides of the same coin. A system of law cannot provide perfect certainty about what is lawful. But it is precisely because of this that it can restrict the uncertainty to which members of the community would otherwise be exposed.

DWORKIN, HOWEVER, takes a very different view of the indeterminacy of law. He argues that any uncertainty about how a legal case should be decided must signify an absence of legal rules and constitutes a "hard" case. This follows from his understanding rules as though they were orders. And it enables him to go on to argue that as in "hard" cases there is no legal rule, the judge must and ought to decide in accordance with "principles." Dworkin's next step is to present the judge's use of "principles" as a reference to moral standards. And, finally, Dworkin reveals the rabbit: "Principles" turn out to be "rights", that is, moral standards which exist outside the law.

Dworkin fortifies this conclusion—that "hard" cases can only be decided by principles found outside the law—with the argument that legal decisions have the same logical character as political decisions. In legal decisions, Dworkin says (rightly), judges choose between competing arguments, both of which may be plausible and about which reasonable men may disagree. But then Dworkin moves on to say that since the logic of a legal argument in "hard" cases is the same as that of a political argument, the criteria that should be invoked in reaching legal decisions are the same as in political decisions. This is, equivalent to arguing that as both cricket and table tennis are played with a bat and ball, therefore cricket is a form of table tennis.

IN THIS FASHION, by using the technique of Creeping Transformation, Professor Dworkin turns what he introduced as a technical explanation of a logical distinction between "rules" and "principles", which is a distinction without a difference, into a justification for concluding that it is normal and desirable for *legal* decisions to be *political* decisions.

The pattern of Ronald Dworkin's argument is the same in his discussion of judicial discretion. He uses apparently technical distinctions to show that the judge's discretion is no different from the legislator's and so establishes that judges necessarily make political decisions. "We" use the term "discretion", Dworkin says, in three different ways: first, to describe what a sergeant does when he is told to take his five most experienced men on patrol; secondly, to indicate a person whose decision is final; and thirdly,

> we say that a man has discretion when some set of standards which impose duties upon him do not in fact purport to impose any duty as to a particular decision, as when a clause in a lease gives the tenant the option in his discretion to renew.

In fact, these three ill-assorted categories do not clarify but totally confuse the real character of judicial discretion. The second category describes the final arbiter, that is, who is authorised to make the final decision. In his third category, Dworkin entirely misses the point. The tenant's option does not illustrate any "set of standards which impose duties" on the tenant. The only meaning of the tenant's "discretion" here is that the tenant—and the tenant alone—has been authorised to make a certain choice.

Only Dworkin's first illustration comes anywhere near to being relevant to the discretion involved in the interpretation of a rule. His example is in fact a *command* which requires the sergeant to decide who are the "five most experienced men." But in identifying so particular a proposition as requiring discretion, Dworkin directly and flagrantly contradicts what he says about the certainty given by a "rule", which is far more abstract than his example.

Despite all these fine distinctions, Dworkin never mentions what is essential to understanding judicial discretion. The exercise of discretion is only "judicial" when it operates within a set of rules designating the procedures and substantive conditions for the exercise of that sort of discretion. If judges were authorised to "exercise discretion" unbridled by legal rules, that fact would mark them as officials within a tyrannical régime rather than within a community under the rule of the law. Yet this is what Dworkin commends when he says that in "hard" cases there is no legal rule that the judge must follow. He denies that the judge then becomes an arbitrary legislator because, he says, the judge is nevertheless bound by "a constellation of principles." And why should moral principles not enter into a legal decision, Dworkin asks disingenuously, just as much as legal rules? The answer is: Because the law does not authorise a judge to decide according to any standard that he might find it convenient to use. The law designates what standards and considerations may, should, or should not enter into the judge's decision.

IN HIS DISCUSSION of "discretion", Dworkin shows that he understands the idea of "authorisation" as little as he does "rules." A judge is not acting in an authorised fashion when he selects at will (as Dworkin says he should) among the many, and probably conflicting, moral notions prevailing in the community. Such a judge is acting as a *legislator* without having

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been authorised to do so. Dworkin is right in saying that a judge of that sort is making *political* and not *legal* judgments. But in approving of such judges, Dworkin is endorsing their usurpation of power which they have not been authorised to exercise.[3]

Ronald Dworkin presents this view of judicial discretion as essential to the defence of individual "rights against the state." His assertions to this effect, taken together with his reference to F. A. Hayek, might lead the unwary to suppose that he is a defender of liberty in the same sense as Hayek. Nothing could be further from the truth. As Dworkin himself says bluntly at times, he is out to defend Equality, which, he maintains, cannot be reconciled with Liberty. "The idea of a right to liberty is a misconceived concept that does disservice to political thought", Dworkin declares. The "idea of a right to liberty" creates "a false sense of a necessary conflict between liberty and other values when social regulation, like the busing program, is proposed" (p. 271).

The law ought to be based, Dworkin says, on "the principle of equal concern and respect." In saying this, he is saying virtually nothing. He does not provide any guidance on how to consider, let alone answer, such a question as: If a person with poor vision is required to get a special licence for driving, does that illustrate *equal* or *unequal* concern and respect for him as compared with other drivers or pedestrians? Similarly, if a law imposes a special tax on inheritance in excess of £50,000, does that constitute *equal* or *unequal* concern and respect for heirs who fall within that category? Do discriminatory laws, or reverse discriminatory laws, or indiscriminate laws meet the test of equal concern and respect?

THAT RONALD DWORKIN FAVOURS reverse discrimination and opposes capital punishment, as well as legislation against homosexuality, pornography, and the Communist party—which he lumps together as if they were all issues of the same sort—in itself indicates nothing about the character of his "liberal" theory. What

[3] A much more forthright statement to the same effect was made by Professor John Griffith (*New Statesman*, 4 February 1977), who wrote: "The political neutrality of the judiciary is a myth, one of those fictions our rulers delight in because it confuses and obscures. . . ." In his new book, Professor Griffith says in conclusion, he will show that the judges are really enforcing "a strongly authoritarian political philosophy", the protection of private property, and "a bundle of Conservative beliefs of which the most obvious are the desirability of keeping the trade unions in their place, and the undesirability of attempting the legislative control of racial discrimination."

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matters is that he describes his convictions on these issues as necessarily true and indisputable, and does not find it necessary to defend them against the serious objections that have been made to them.

Whereas earlier, when speaking about "hard" cases, Dworkin argued that all practical decisions are indeterminate and that reasonable men may always disagree, in the last chapters of his book he reverses himself. Earlier he said that "rights" are not "spooky sorts of things":

> the sense of rights I propose to use does not make ontological assumptions of that sort: it simply shows a claim of right to be a special, in the sense of a restricted, sort of judgment about what is right or wrong for governments to do.

But later we are told that the truth of some conclusions about "rights" is indisputable because there is an "objective reality" of "rights and duties" which are "objective facts, independent of the structure or content of conventional systems." The so-called "myth" that there is one right answer in a "hard" case—which throughout the earlier chapters of his book Dworkin denounces—turns out, in the end, to be not a myth but an undeniable truth. Whether or not Dworkin's "rights" are "spooky", his ontological assumptions are certainly substantial. To people who say, "Surely, it cannot be that in a genuinely hard case one side is simply right and the other simply wrong", Dworkin replies:

> But why not? It may be that the supposition that one side may be right and the other wrong is cemented into our habits of thought at a level so deep that we cannot coherently deny that supposition, no matter how sceptical or hard-headed we wish to be in such matters. . . . The "myth" that there is one right answer in a hard case is both recalcitrant and successful. Its recalcitrance and success count as arguments that it is no myth.

On these words, Dworkin ends his account of his new "liberal" theory of law.

TO SUPPOSE THAT there is any resemblance whatever between Dworkin's talk of "rights" and the theory of natural law is a gross error. When he suggests that the policies he advocates about the treatment of Blacks or the distribution of economic goods, for instance, follow necessarily from indisputable moral principles, Dworkin is merely demonstrating once again that he utterly fails to understand (or deliberately misinterprets) the meaning of a principle, a rule, and a law.

When Aquinas said that certain principles of natural law could be known to be true, he sharply and unequivocally distinguished between the highly abstract principles of natural law and the determinations of it in "positive" law enacted by the ruler. And he made it clear that good men

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could reasonably disagree about whether positive law conformed to natural law because there is no necessary logical link between them. Whereas Dworkin asserts that as soon as you find a moral defect in a law or a judicial decision, you are freed of any obligation to accept it, Aquinas made it plain that a citizen who denied an obligation to obey the law was declaring himself to be a revolutionary, and Aquinas considered under what unusual circumstances that might be justified. A current defender of natural law, Professor Lon L. Fuller, in his famous debate with H. L. A. Hart on law and morality,[4] argued that even if certain laws in Nazi Germany had been enacted by valid procedures, there was no obligation to obey them because they were not part of a true system of law. It did not exist, Fuller said, *because the Nazis regularly violated the distinction between legal and political decisions*. Fuller did *not* say that where the rule of law does prevail, a citizen has no obligation to obey any rule or ruling of which he disapproves. Yet this is precisely what Ronald Dworkin maintains that every citizen is entitled to do. Far from endorsing a doctrine of natural law, Dworkin is advocating a tyranny of the righteous.

OF COURSE A COMMUNITY IS bound to share, as Dworkin says, certain notions of right and wrong. If the community is a family or a tribe, living primitively, these ideas will have become embedded in routines of behaviour; and disagreement will be limited and decided by the head of the family or chieftain. But in a community that is larger and more differentiated, there may be many different and conflicting ideas about moral standards. It will not, then, be obvious what common rules should prevail or how disputes should be settled. The more heterogeneous the community and the richer the civilisation, the more far-reaching will be the possibilities for dispute.

If we recognise this, we are not displaying, as Ronald Dworkin maintains, "moral scepticism." We are recognising that if human beings, who can always differ, because they can interpret and respond differently, that is, because they are rational, wish to live together in peace and security, they must have common rules. The promulgation of such rules will reflect a moral consensus. But such rules are not identical with "accepted moral standards", nor are they merely a selection among such standards. They are formal and relatively precise statements of the rights and duties that members of the community

[4] H. L. A. Hart, "Positivism & the Separation of Law and Morals", *Harvard Law Review*, 71, 1958, pp. 593–629. Lon L. Fuller, "Positivism & Fidelity to Law", pp. 630–673.

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are obliged to respect.

Legal rules bear the same relation to "generally accepted moral principles" as an architect's drawing does to his sense of proportion. The law makes it possible for people with divergent ideas to live together in peace because it gives a more determinate character to vague moral convictions by defining "rights" and "duties" along with procedures for ascertaining, disputing, and enforcing them. The alternative to respecting rules of law is not, as Ronald Dworkin wishes us to believe, a "higher morality." It is the chaos of anarchy, the somnolence and uniformity of a primitive society, or the tyranny of arbitrary power.

A SYSTEM OF LAW can only survive if most members of the community can distinguish between the validity and the desirability of law, and if they recognise an obligation to accept legal decisions made by authorised persons in an authorised manner even when they consider such decisions to be wrong. Of course one of the parties to a law suit is bound to consider the decision wrong. But if the man who loses the suit can successfully claim (as Dworkin advocates) a "right" to disobey, the legal procedure is reduced to a meaningless ceremony, and there is no rule of law.

Recognising an obligation to subscribe to valid legal decisions does not exclude challenging their validity, or trying to change the law by authorised procedures, or even deciding to break the law. When Henry Thoreau went to jail, he did not deny his obligation to subscribe to the law. One may also decide that the *whole system of law* is so unjust that it is time to mount the barricades. But such a decision should not be paraded as an interpretation of law. It is a decision to destroy the entire legal system and to make a revolution. Similarly judges are obliged to decide in terms of the established law even when they disapprove of it. That leaves them free as private citizens to try to change the law. They may also decide that the law is too unjust to uphold—at which point they ought to retire from the bench. If they remain to exercise their power as they think fit, regardless of the law, they are no longer acting as judges but as revolutionaries. Whether deliberately or through confusion, this is what Dworkin is in effect advocating.

MUCH REMAINS TO BE clarified about how judges can interpret established law in changing circumstances without going beyond their authorised discretion. Much remains to be said also on how communal morality is reflected in the law. Ronald Dworkin has contributed nothing on either subject. Perhaps his book may serve to warn those who hate tyranny of how talk of "rights" can be used to destroy what they most want to preserve.

That *Taking Rights Seriously* should be the comprehensive statement of how the Professor of Jurisprudence at Oxford University understands the law is one of the sadder signs of the time.

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[1] *Abba Abba*. By ANTHONY BURGESS. Faber, £3.95.

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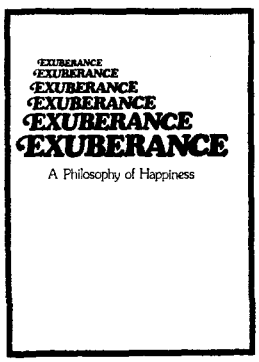

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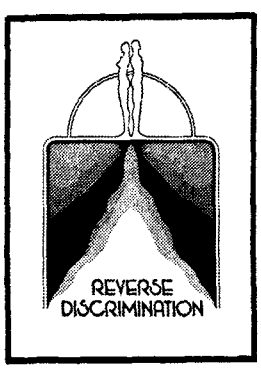

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monsieur?"—a question he momentarily interprets as meaning does he wish "to profit from her caress." His refusal to do so can seem in line with that refusal of eternity which is the subject of the three great odes, but in recounting the episode to Severn Keats describes a "long night caressing her long nakedness." His fantasy of going to bed with "*l'ultima principessa*", sister of the murderous, Romantic emperor who is being eaten by cancer on St Helena, is exotically sensual, and her presence in the story seems beautifully and significantly right: she is both an historic and a mythic personage, and so is truly Roman.

This is what the Roman dialect poet, Guiseppe Belli, means when he says: "To many Romans Rome is a tract only in space and not at all in time, so that the tyrannous Popes and Caesars share a kind of mythic contemporaneity." This is the mythic dimension, that sense of eternity, which suffuses the story, and yet Keats is never presented as wandering through Rome haloed by the white radiance of eternity—rather, he exists in an eternal city which is colourfully stained by all the senses, a world that is incorrigibly plural: "The whirring fragments of sound that splintered off from the bell's main note were those colours, and the fundamental bongggg was white. Colours whirred or whirled into God's white and away and back again."

Anthony Burgess's account of the young poet's terminal weeks, which could so easily have been a sentimental scenario, becomes a fine and gentle meditation on the essential nature of the imagination. With the quietest authority Burgess rejects any simplistic and conventional opposition between the permanence of art and the transitoriness of life, and shows how Keats inhabits a world which is warmly and precisely both the marvellous actuality of Rome and the sensuously sophisticated reality of his own imagination. Tied to a dying body, his imagination returns to the concrete particulars where it began.

This was Yeats's subject towards the end of his life:

> *Those masterful images because complete*
> *Grew in pure mind, but out of what began?*
> *A mound of refuse or the sweepings of a street,*
> *Old kettles, old bottles, and a broken can,*
> *Old iron, old bones, old rags, that raving slut*
> *Who keeps the till. Now that my ladder's gone,*
> *I must lie down where all the ladders start,*
> *In the foul rag-and-bone shop of the heart.*

And in *Abba Abba* there is a redeeming insistence on refuse, muck, bad smells and mucus, for in Burgess's catholic vision—as in Keats's pagan responsiveness—every apparently coarse and ugly detail becomes intensely right and necessary. There can be no dualism here between mind and body.

This monistic emphasis is felt throughout the story—particularly in a scene set in a scruffy tavern where Keats is having a literary conversation with Belli. He glances over at the undoored kitchen and sees "a slattern, wiping her red hands after washing trenchers, seized eagerly by the waiting-lout and fumbled: a bare bosom flashed, strawberry-nippled, and was pawed. She ran, giggling, he ran after." Keats goes on to talk about the "atomising of the self" and of how a saint's life is possibly "a kind of art" when he looks up again and sees that the "slattern and the serving-lout had returned to the kitchen from somewhere dark at the back, no longer fumbling and fumbled, sleek, rather, if sleekness was at all possible to two such, sleek as street cats could sometimes be." The comparison of these greasy lovers to cats is significant because, earlier in the story, Belli reads Keats's sonnet to Mrs Reynold's cat and discusses it with Gulielmi who says that cats are "the eternal truths, and the taste of noonday soup, and farting and snot." Mauled or sleek, cats become the living symbols of an imagination that is both temporal and eternal, that derives its masterful images from the rubbish they scavenge in. In Yeats's terms, the imagination is intimately bound to "all complexities of mire or blood", and in *Abba Abba* its essential constituents are shown to be piss, shit, blood and sputum—the rubbish of the body. And throughout Burgess insists on the only language adequate to this reality—a string of curses, dialect words, blasphemies and sexual puns. Belli, therefore, feels that he has "a duty to the low and dirty language of his native city", and so he writes a Petrarchan sonnet which is a catalogue of slang words for the penis. Keats translates it and by doing so demonstrates that he too believes that however strict and perfect the form of a work of art is its content should be coarse and animate. Again, Yeats's terminal insistence, in "Under Ben Bulben", on the well-made verse which sings "Porter-drinkers' randy laughter" exactly parallels both Keats's and Belli's commitment to an art that is both sensual and elaborate. Such art is tied to life by the words it uses, for there is a difference, Belli argues, between "language" and "dialect": "A language waves flags and is blown up by politicians. A dialect keeps to things, appetites, feelings, odours, people, not the big bannered abstractions."

IT'S HERE that Burgess begins to draw every element in the story together and to fuse art and life in a way that is possible only to the most catholic and unmanichean of imaginations. There is nothing doctrinaire about Burgess's catholicism: he can present a Keats dying "in bloody cack and sweat and shivers" who cries out to Severn: "Fuck and shit to your lying gentle

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Jesus", who asserts that there is "neither virtue nor use in suffering" and that the brain is physical, not the seat of the soul: "It is a fine and cunning trelliswork, but we may eat brain as we eat feet and flanks." But Burgess is able, without any forcing, to accommodate this within his essentially religious point of view by introducing Belli's meditation on the sonnet form which

> must have existed *in potentia* from the beginning, but it was made flesh with such as Petrarch. Behind the thousands of sonnets in the world, in Tuscan, Roman, French, German, even English, shines the one ultimate perfect sonnet. It has fourteen lines that divide into an octave of a rhyme scheme ABBA ABBA and a sestet CDC DCD, really two tercets. One may vary the rhymes a little but the essential shape will remain. The wordless sonnet that still rhymes, that says nothing, having no words, but yet speaks. It says: I am this, but I am also this. In my eight lines X, in my six lines Y, but in my total fourteen ever the unity, the ultimate statement whose meaning is itself. What is this, your eminence, but the true image of God?

Belli then thinks of his phallic sonnet as a "ribald and unworthy effusion wagging a beshitten tail" which, he considers, he was right to suppress. And yet he also feels that "the form in the mind of God did not reject it, any more than God himself rejected *cazzi* and *fiche* and the other dirty commodities of his creation."

Belli's meditation is paralleled by Keat's dying vision:

> Christ *pendebat* from his cross and cried ABBA ABBA. Now John knew that this was the Aramaic for father father, but he knew better that it was the rhyme scheme of a Petrarchan sonnet octave. It came to him thus that the sonnet form might subsist above language, but he did not see how this was possible. Language itself was perhaps only a ghost of things in the outer world to which it adhered, and a ghost of a ghost was a notion untenable totally.

Christ *pendebat* is also "*dumpendebat*"—a slang word for penis which fascinates Keats, and this passage's complex fusion of suffering, prayer, art and what the pious would reject as life's "dirty commodities" argues the completeness of Burgess's vision. It justifies his title which isn't an example of merely tricksy punning, but an absolutely appropriate naming of his subject. If the translations of some of Belli's sonnets which Burgess adds as a coda to his story are disappointing, *Abba Abba* is nevertheless a brilliant achievement, the work of a wise and subtle visionary.

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ously imaginative and intelligent narrative which, had she only given her fascinating subject a more considered treatment, might have been a classic account of contemporary neo-colonialism. The opening chapter promises a satiric exposé of UN aid to the Third World: Ponsonby looks at a "brand new Family Planning Clinic at the end of a dirt-track in the middle of the Javanese countryside" and decides that something must be done—the local women, for whom a large family is part of their cultural tradition, never visit the clinic whose American staff pass the time by playing backgammon with intra-uterine devices. Ponsonby writes a critical report but is run over by a combine harvester before his proposals can be acted on. He is replaced by another decent Englishman, Hugh Brownlow, who leaves a senior post with the Arts Council to join the UN in the hopes of getting a knighthood. But what could have been a light-hearted account of cultural non-communication—an old Etonian failing to understand "the infinite unpredictabilities of the Third World"—soon becomes a curiously effective cross between a thriller and a realistic novel. Two murders occur early in the story and Brownlow begins to discern a pattern, he also becomes genuinely involved in the problems of Indonesia and, as the action unfolds, shows himself to be more than the decent, leisured stereotype he at first appears.

This is brought out through his friendship with the shoe-shine boy, Burhan, who falls in love with Brownlow's young daughter, Emily, and who is a shrewdly innocent Kim-figure:

> He had the appearance of a boy of ten, though he was possibly older. But he had the wit and the cunning of an adult. Within a few years of his arrival in Djogja, he had become the contact man for all the underground activities of the province. He was wholly innocent, and even though he was running from dope supplier to consumer, from one political cell to another, from call-girl to pimp and back again, he remained innocent still.

Shoe-shining is Burhan's "gentle cover" for a whole range of corrupt activities, and he is the hidden heart of a strange community of native Indonesians and English, German and American officials. Among them are an agonised gourmet called Von Henkel who is ironically employed by the World Food Programme, and two homosexuals, Peter Weiner and Richard Stern, who have both committed murder and who decide to kill Brownlow because they know he suspects them. Their pact is sealed in a powerful scene which is resonant with the general corruption Bernice Rubens so expertly analyses:

> Then Peter broke into song, "O Tannenbaum", relishing every single whiter-than-white Aryan syllable, wallowing in a true Teutonic mish-mash of sentimentality and cruelty. And to the accompaniment of this cacophonous trio, for Richard insisted on that form of ensemble, Peter threw himself on the sobbing hulk, and with a raging and punitive love, he buggered him.

Weiner and Stern set about their murder attempt by secretly pouring a bottle of "highly-charged hash-oil" into the exotic, native punch which is being served at a party. What follows is an extraordinary and brilliantly realised scene in which the most disparate personalities merge in a state of total communal euphoria: Brownlow's wife, Belinda, is "folded into a waiter"; Isani, the local chief of police, lolls on a couch "like Bacchus"; Stern's father and Von Henkel who hate each other in ordinary life (Stern is a Jew, Von Henkel was in the *Wehrmacht*) begin to waltz together now that the hash has released each of them from his social and historical "straitjacket"; and Brownlow begins to enthuse about his days at Eton because "under hash, the man will come out, even if he has not become a man at all." Relieved of all pretences and social requirements, everyone is filled with a "liquid joy" which is undisturbed by the news that the local barracks has just been raided by communist guerrillas. Stern and Wiener then abduct Brownlow who is gaily singing the Eton boating-song—it is a remarkable, crazy, but convincing scene.

INSTEAD OF BEING murdered, Brownlow is accidentally kidnapped by a group of guerrillas and is held for weeks while everyone in Djogja believes he must be dead. Here, the narrative pace and the account of Brownlow's relations with his captors are particularly impressive—a complex tension develops between a deepening mutual respect and an awareness that the only outcome of the situation must be Brownlow's death. He plays chess and discusses politics with his captors, gradually realising the justice of a cause which stems from the brutality of the government and the contradictions between capitalist economics and agricultural aid: "When aid was politically tied, it was as blackmailing as charity. Yes, they had cause enough for frustration."

The action now moves towards a spectacular culmination: the guerrillas are going to attack the gaol in Djogja and release the prisoners who are being tortured there. They will mount their attack on 30 September 1970, a date which marks three anniversaries: "It recorded the end of Brownlow's first year in the Ponsonby Post; it also marked the 400th performance of the *Ramayana* at the Prambanan Temple. It was, too, the fifth anniversary of the abortive September 30th coup when the PKI had attempted to overthrow the government."

As the moon waxes and this date approaches, the situation in the cave becomes increasingly tense, and Bernice Rubens explores it with a uniquely sensitive intelligence: Brownlow knows

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his presence is a continual danger; he understands that they can't simply let him go because that would involve trusting him not to reveal their plans and position; he is aware, too, that they are loth to kill him, but knows that he can't play on their feelings because "if you blackmailed via affection, that affection was quickly assailable."

This elaboration of the tactful nuances of an extreme situation is just one example of the way Ms Rubens brings a deep imaginative sympathy to her, at times, sensational story. Her portrayal of a conventional, decent Englishman facing certain death with a silent and decorous stoicism is intensely convincing. And so, too, is the moonlit scene where Brownlow is "officially" executed, but actually freed as the guerrillas leave to attack the prison under "the onslaught of the full moon." Their raid is bloody, but successful, and at the end Brownlow thinks with sympathy of the revolutionaries: "He would send food, too, and through Burhan, he would play them postal chess."

This, then, is a rough and necessary outline of what is a boldly imaginative novel—a story that oddly combines satiric, sensational and realistic elements. The narrative tension is essential to its impact, and if some of the large number of characters are blurred or vaguely drawn, *The Ponsonby Post* is nevertheless a very fine achievement which daringly seizes as its subject an alien culture and the new Western imperialism. The native and European community in Djogja, with its collusions, secrets, complicated loyalties and corruptions, takes on a heightened significance. A firm historical sense, together with a deep responsiveness to the contemporary moment and an unrestricted sympathy, make the story tense, powerful and radically intelligent. It's perhaps curious to notice an author nowadays make a case for English decency in the character of Brownlow, as though the spectacle of American imperialism has provoked a nostalgia for the more traditional, now defunct, English variety. This is just one of the many issues which this fascinating novel raises—issues which could have been explored more deeply had the subject been given an ampler and more spacious treatment.

J. M. COETZEE ALSO TAKES a contemporary political situation as his subject, for his diary-novel[3] is less an exploration of the mind of a tormented spinster on a remote South African farm than a strict and penetrating intellectual meditation on the nature of history.

[3] *In the Heart of the Country*. By J. M. COETZEE. Secker and Warburg, £3.50.

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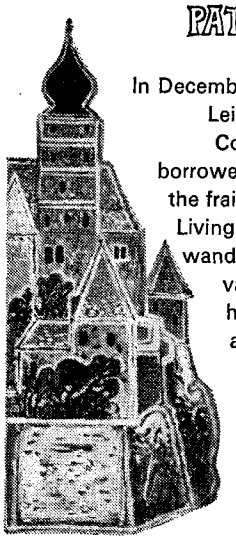

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Magda, who describes herself as "an angry spinster in the heart of nowhere", is an "uneasy consciousness" who is fighting against "becoming one of the forgotten ones of history." She confides to her diary that there is "no act I know that will liberate me into the world" and when she does act (or fantasise action) by murdering her father's new wife and then her father, there is no sense of liberation—instead, we have to read her action symbolically as a prophetic account of the historical destiny of South Africa. Coetzee's analysis can be roughly interpreted like this: white South Africa has released itself from history; it is a static society which has sought to preserve itself by becoming a lonely castaway, a fixed and introverted state which is utterly inflexible and incapable of bending to that developing process which is history. In less rigid societies change is possible without violence, but in this situation only the bloodiest murder will liberate it "into the world" and return it forcibly to history.

Magda's tense and vicious diary-entries therefore become efforts to articulate the dilemma of a doomed and defensive society. She lives in a stone desert which, it's implied, is as hard and vindictive as the religion of the Dutch Reformed Church. "God has forgotten us", she writes towards the end, "and we have forgotten God. There is no love from us towards God nor any wish that God should turn his mind to us. The flow has ceased. We are the castaways of history. *That* is the origin of our feeling of solitude." And Magda herself embodies this condition of being alienated from history; she is "simply a ghost or a vapour floating at the intersection of a certain latitude and a certain longitude"; she lives in a "desolate eternal present", a "vortex" or "black hole" that is the condition of any society which, having temporarily arrested the current of history, is now close to a cataclysmic event. This condition of stasis, which is what is meant by the closing image of Magda's wish to die "in the petrified garden, behind locked gates, near my father's bones", is perhaps best described as a state of total cultural narcissism. This is conveyed in Magda's descriptions of staring obsessively into mirrors and of looking at flowers which "commune with themselves ... in their ecstasy of pure being." She sees that the "farm, the desert, that whole world as far as the horizon is in an ecstasy of communion with itself, exalted by the vain urge of my consciousness to inhabit it."

This vision of an onanistic desert is the image of a society which, having made history stand, as it believes, permanently still, has now refined itself into an ecstasy of self-absorption. Magda, who is "an emptiness filled with a great absence,

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an absence which is a desire to be filled, to be fulfilled", is the embodiment of an alienated spirit which is trying to struggle out of the sterility of pure being into the world of flux and becoming—she wants to be reunited with historical process. The terms of her desire are identical to the shape of the novel itself: "Born into a vacuum in time, I have no understanding of changing forms. My talent is all for immanence, for the fire or ice of identity at the heart of things. Lyric is my medium, not chronicle." And so *In the Heart of the Country* is an intellectual lyric which sings the absence of history, the electric lull before history breaks, rather than a chronicle of a frustrated woman's life—on the level of individual psychology the story is unconvincing, but as a piece of cultural psychoanalysis and diagnosis, it's glitteringly precise. It tells of a society turned to stone and of terrible retributions to come.

HISTORY, TOO, is the subject of Carlos Fuentes's massive novel[4] which, with its cast of concupiscent dwarfs, freaks, sodomites, lecherous mice and obsessed lunatics, is dismayingly unapproachable. To write a novel as long as *Anna Karenina* and yet to deny it even a minute of narrative interest is to drown the reader in what one character terms "a plethora of sensations." *Terra Nostra* offers history as *grand guignol*—it isn't so much a broken-backed monster as a spineless, bleeding jelly which gives a surreal account of the life and times of Philip II of Spain. Reality being "a sick dream" and history (via Eliot) "a pattern of timeless moments", anything is possible—Elizabeth Tudor can marry Philip II and apostrophise a mouse:

> "Mus . . . have you forgotten your lover? Mus, have you so soon forgotten our wedding in the courtyard, how your tiny teeth nibbled my flesh, darling mouse, how you devoured my virginity, mouse, my love? Mus, I have fulfilled my pact . . . I delivered to you the body of my lover. Mus, I returned to you, poor tiny, scorned beastie, the image of the angel that once was yours . . . Mus . . . ."

An idiot prince can climb into a sarcophagus and lie down "among the remains of his own body", and a ninety-year old woman give birth to a child with twelve toes and a "wine-red cross on his back." That history is a series of monstrous births is a perfectly tenable view, but any confidence in Senor Fuentes's ability to articulate it must be early and severely shaken by his impressionistic account of a Parisian July in the opening chapter:

> July is the anger of the crowds and the love of couples; July is paving stones, bicycles, and a lazy river; July is an organ-grinder, and many beheaded kings; July has the heat of Seurat and the voice of Yves Montand, the colour of Dufy and the eyes of René Clair.

There is a rich and powerful imagination behind this novel, but it is wasted in a manner that could have been tragic, if the failure wasn't so spectacular.

[4] *Terra Nostra*. By CARLOS FUENTES. Secker and Warburg, £5.95. Secker have also reissued his earlier, more accessible, but deeply self-indulgent, *The Death of Artemio Cruz*.

Young Fools, Old Fools

NEW POETRY—By Douglas Dunn

" . . . KEEPING TO STRICT RULES is a pleasure as well as a challenge." Poetics has never been much of a topic in English criticism, but can it really have sunk as low as Clive James's wisdom suggests?

His debt is to John Fuller's *Epistles to Several Persons*. It was this book that had the honour of arousing Mr James's admiration, which he calls "competitive instincts", with its "convincing demonstration that verse can still hope to be public and exact."

Public for whom? Which public? Verse? Exact? *Fan-Mail*[1] gives me nothing in the way of positive answers. Instead, its sustained electric doggerel exudes one of the mightiest and most forceful impressions I've come across of everything that is wrong with contemporary English writing. Despite the decibels of Mr James's delivery, his lines show little more than an undergraduate's affection for updated 18th-century models of verse. Alexander Pope goes pop. MacFlecknoe meets Manhattan Transfer meets almost everyone New, Brilliant, and Fashionable. An amiably Byronic snottiness is contorted by W. H. Auden and microphonic woom. As style it adds up to the posturing some English poets have been getting up to lately. They have tried a neat, exact, public sort of verse, as if recalling a dream of couplets, rime couée, terza rima, ottava rima, in the hope

[1] *Fan-Mail: seven verse letters*. By CLIVE JAMES. Faber & Faber, £1.95.

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it will dispel the evil prevalence of free verse and "post-Modernism." They know it won't, but they'll go down fighting. It is a school of willed brilliance, of "skill", born in the increasingly redundant milieu of Oxbridge. Their poems are little more than adjuncts of the intriguing superficiality of the sophisticates. In that world Mr James is a sportsman of the stretched versicle, rather slow on feeling, picking up speed only to congratulate those he likes to agree with or to deliver a quick put-down on those he loves to be seen delivering a quick put-down on. The entire enterprise reinforces the anachronism of the British style in almost everything.

Much of what this school stands for arises from a doleful redeployment of the querulousness of later Auden against a climate (much of it indeed dispiriting) in which, however, its own lack of argument is one of the least attractive features.

Ted Hughes and Philip Larkin, two widely read and influential poets, have refused to fall for this counter-measuring of tradition and technique against "the decline of standards." Hughes's least controversial poems, his still much admired earlier work, could never be pointed at as examples of finely-wrought artistry. His language is impacted on itself. Rhyme and assonance are governed by a logic of imagination and subject rather than rules of prosody and other prior conditions. Larkin's verse, too, though often held up to the light for its craft, displays few if any of the flaunted virtuosities Mr James or Peter Scupham appear to consider obligatory. It is inconceivable that Larkin would want to write a series of sonnets in which the first line of each is the last line of a preceding sonnet, all eventually becoming the lines of the last and fifteenth in the series. Mr Fuller did it in "The Labours of Hercules." Now Peter Scupham[2] has done the same thing in "The Hinterland." And Hughes and Larkin are at virtually opposite poles in contemporary English poetry. Mr Hughes's writing is a brave and perhaps hubristic account of its own faith in its practices as of the essence of poetry in what it is able to reveal. Dr Larkin's technique is one of a consummate adequacy which, as we are unused to the adequate, looks more ingenious than it is.

Between these two standard and acknowledged writers—everyone, at least, knows who they are—is a large ground, inhabited by many poets, whose ideas of technique appear remarkably lacking in confidence. They are either forcefully different from the extremes (Hughes-Larkin) or caricatures of them. Part of the confusion stems from frustration caused by the failure of English poetry and criticism to describe the virtues of free verse and formal verse in a post-Modernist climate and for native purposes.

> That a specimen of free verse can be found displaying a complexity and profundity comparable to those of such poems as Hardy's *During Wind and Rain* . . . I do not believe; nor do I believe that such a poem can ever be composed . . . I believe that the nature of free verse is a permanent obstacle to such a composition.

Thus Yvor Winters pointing out, and long ago, the hang-up English poets have never quite got over. To what extent a perception like it underlies Mr James's verse, or Peter Scupham's, I don't know; I imagine they have at least a conventional high regard for standard free-verse poems. There are different kinds of poetry than Hardy's and equally valid. A criticism of these *kinds*, and a contemporary poetics, are both badly needed.

MR SCUPHAM[2] RELIES heavily on a harmlessly archaeological experience of history which, if it tries hard to convey a broadeningly imaginative sensation of the past, never quite makes it. His diction is too precious and literary. It has the consistency of jam. Part-rhymes, and an iambic measure from which excitement has been crudely expunged, batten down whatever candour there is in his writing, preventing the emergence of lyric feeling, or of the genuinely poetic disturbance I feel is there, though it is never quite strong enough. It is certainly an *expert* poetry, written with a connoisseur's charm and panache for other connoisseurs. It is the sort of verse that visits old churches with its friends and children, stares at gargoyles, runs its hands wonderingly over carved misericords; it knows the names of all the parts of speech, all the tropes, all the counts of metre, all these things that Mr Scupham cannot quite retrieve from their obsoletion. They are not obsolete, though; it is just that Mr Scupham cannot quite retrieve them.

In some poets formal verse crops up mainly in a colloquial, sub-Larkin manner.

> *So when a vagueness called The Arts*
> *Became the thing for me to do*
> *And not my father's father's firm*
> *Which claimed my father, it was said*
> *"Poor Arthur's silly fits and starts*
> *Are coming out in John." They knew*
> *Exactly where I'd got it from—*
> *"To put such ideas in his head."*

The predicament of an artistic young English bourgeois is nicely exposed in these lines from John Mole's "A Proper Caution."[3] It gets my sympathy if nothing else; I feel twice as pleased to have been born at the bottom of the pile and spared such anguish.

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[2] *The Hinterland.* By PETER SCUPHAM. Oxford University Press, £1.95.

[3] *Our Ship.* By JOHN MOLE. Secker & Warburg, £2.90.

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What Mr Mole's poem appears to do is accept the status of a parlour clown who has forgotten his antics while he dithers before the possibility he might actually be implicated in that view of "a vagueness called The Arts", which is as debilitating as it is English. But the centrality of the "predicament" to contemporary English arts is almighty, and it is convenient of Mr Mole to express it.

Colloquial and "light" as his rhymed verse is, Mr Mole's free verse shows something of the compromise with that style which has made it respectable in English poetry. This sample, "Looking like Rain", is a complete poem:

A sullen darkening around our faces
holds us apart. Once more, the world
moves in on itself and it looks like rain.

After, there are no words for what rain looked like;
only for how, with a new brightness,
the air heals behind what has passed through.

Free verse is as absent from the poem as formality. Mr Mole has refused his lines the freedom of their full syntactical sense or rhythmic stretch. A traditional idea of a poem has intervened between Mr Mole and the ostensible style of the poem he was writing. Whatever ideas he has of what a free verse poem is and what a formal poem is have not clashed in his imagination for an interesting new poem to emerge from that inevitable stylistic and expressive struggle. "Looking like Rain" is casual, a poem that has refused to admit any formal requirement whatsoever, with no overwhelming imaginative or poetic idea to compensate for the loss. But given the nature of the poem's subject, it might be reasonable to think of it as characteristic of English lyric poetry. It requires the melody and form associated with such poems. As it is, all it can lay claim to is its "own voice", a phrase invented for the excuse of self-expression when nothing else exists. What is asked for here is not the curlicues or soft statuary Mr Scupham mistakes for "artistry." Mr Mole's free verse lacks an adequate confrontation with the demands of art and style at an elementary level. It is a pity, for his gentle, questing lyricism is a true ground on which to build.

TRADITIONAL TECHNIQUES are the mainstay of Gavin Ewart's poems.[4] They are used in a way that seems to strike a note of elegy for their own departure from poetry as a whole, and another note of praise for their survival in his own poems in particular.

His poetic temperament is odd, confronting

[4] *No Fool like an Old Fool.* By GAVIN EWART. Gollancz, £2.95.

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life and verse from a unique and distinctive angle, quite unlike anyone else I can think of. From the technical side of poem-making, his seriousness lies in what might not be an entirely conscious affection for the old-fashioned, the world of Anthony Powell's early novels. He balances that—if I'm right in believing it to be there—with a lively and satirical pleasure in the metropolis. A balancing act of the obsolete, or fading, with the attractions of the present-dayness of life is there, too, in Larkin's poems, and in Betjeman's. A grimmer, darker version of it can be seen in Peter Porter's work, and in D. J. Enright's.

Mr Ewart has managed to come to terms with what he wants to write and the variety of means open to him. Because of the retrospective nature of his technique, and his ability to use it consistently on contemporary subjects, his poems have an assurance which, however, younger poets will find difficult to emulate. Mr Ewart has solved all post-Modernist problems by largely ignoring them, and, in his case, they have obligingly gone away.

ENGLISH MANNERS and expectations in poetry are of second-hand but more than academic interest to Scottish and Irish writers. Outside of nationalist readers, these expectations in their public forms may well be so similar as to make no difference. The contemporary interest of Irish and Scottish poetry has hardly been the result of alternative national traditions coming to the fore. Questions of "tradition" are arguably more vexed in Ireland and Scotland than elsewhere.

In theory at least the number of interesting Irish and Scots poets is still more than the coincidence of talents or something in the water. Decline of British cultural authority, and English passivity before it, have left them more identifiable by nationality and more willing to be so identified. According to the *status quo*, the vitality of our literature is distributed from London. More and more, however, it has become just that, a signpost to the print shop and the addresses of papers in which reputations are made or broken by those from the anachronistic milieu of which Mr James is a stalwart. Failure of nerve and gruff over-reaction to the "decline of standards", are both less conspicuous in these outlying countries and regions. They become clearer the closer you get to London. It is the "standards" of London that have "declined": elsewhere they are in process of being changed. The above is intended as a statement of fact. It is not a variation on the vulgar and banal North *versus* South, Province *versus* Capital, contention.

"A boat rounds the point in Gaelic." Surprises like that have always been gratifyingly common in Norman MacCaig's poetry. In free verse, though, it is the sort of invention that works against the unity of a poem. In a sense, it is *too* quotable. It invites being anthologised from the poem. It is also a habit of expression which, again in free verse, looks too much like mid-poetic journalism.

Mr MacCaig was noted in the past for a crisp, plain rhymed verse in which his tough-minded clarity and intellect gelled in the objects of his acute concentration. Only two poems in *Tree of Strings*[5] rhyme. Throughout the book his writing is mostly in a jaunty free verse. It has developed in his poetry in the last ten years and he appears to have given himself over to it almost entirely.

His free verse has always struck me as second-rate in comparison with the excellence of his rhymed, formal poems. There have been times when I've wondered at *why* so accomplished a verse-maker should *want* looser forms of writing when the technique already developed in successive books was satisfyingly achieved. At the same time, it suggests a tendency to look upon the Scottish gift of resting on old laurels as a sin. His poetry has not been kept up to date by it, though a more naked, clearer honesty is revealed by Mr MacCaig's more recent style, as well as a more noticeable subjectivity. His imagination and inventiveness are also consistent enough for him to gain his newer style without sacrifice of artistry. His mind has the same, perhaps greater, freedom of play, even if the niceties which rhyme and metre once offered him are less intriguing as a result.

> *. . . for I am the last of my race*
> *as you are, and she, and he is.*

Lines like these have perhaps made MacCaig a difficult taste for nationalist readers to acquire. Presumably they acquire his nationality, and prefer his highland landscape poems—now increasingly elegiac—his background instead of his foreground. His attitude to nationality is

[5] *Tree of Strings*. By NORMAN MACCAIG. Chatto and Windus, £2.25.

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implicit in an overall concern for the individuality of all persons and things and phenomena. Everything in his poems is a special case. His sense of delight is uncommon in contemporary poetry, and no less beguiling now than ever it was.

ANOTHER SCOTTISH POET, Edwin Morgan, may well endorse that, if his collection of translations is anything to go by.[6] Consistently prolific, Mr Morgan's reputation has nonetheless been slow to form into anything like the admission of importance his work deserves. Making that continually difficult is the unevenness of his poems, as well as their variety of forms and kinds. A central concern, other than a vague energy, or commitment to a principle of inventiveness and try-anything-once, is hard to find.

The title sequence of his new book of original poems[7] will be calculated to give Mr James and his adherents a small case of apoplexy. It is a set of 100 poems in free verse meditating time and history from a base in the sensibility of the Persian, Hafiz. Erudite possibilities appeal to Mr Morgan's imagination. Imagery and allusion cumulate into exotica from which the modern world is never far.

As a dab hand at formality, Mr Morgan can be expected to have made decisions of some sort about a personal poetics that at least justify the methods of his writing to himself. He is exactly the sort of poet equipped to write an *art poétique*. A fascination with form has led him to exploit any formal idea that strikes him as appropriate, or even as pleasurable or amusing, rather than cultivate a particular metrical expertise. *The New Divan* includes free verse, blank verse, metre, incantation and litany, as well as sound poems and concrete poems, examples of his interest in poem-as-gadget. He has humour, to be seen in a poem about education, "School's Out." Most impressive to my taste are several love poems of markedly strong feeling written in a style of plain, lyric reportage of the emotions. Interesting and moving, too, are his poems dedicated to the memory of Veronica Forrest-Thomson,[8] a poet who died tragically young.

SOME YEARS AGO the French poet Yves Bonnefoy declared that "the material of poetry after attempting so many paths is meditation upon death." It was hardly an original thought then and is not now, though there is

[6] *Rites of Passage*. By EDWIN MORGAN. Carcanet Press, £3.25, £2.25 paper.
[7] *The New Divan*. By EDWIN MORGAN. Carcanet Press, £3.00, £2.00 paper.
[8] *On the Periphery*. By VERONICA FORREST-THOMSON. Street Editions, 31 Panton Street, Cambridge. No price.

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DENT

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still truth in it. I imagine it to be the kind of truth about poetry Edwin Morgan would deny. Alasdair Maclean,[9] however, has come to a similar belief about death and poetry. In a prefatory note to his second collection, he writes that the death of his mother led him to the understanding "that death was the noblest and most profound of the great themes of poetry, or what the love poets turn to when they put away childish things."

Mr Maclean then goes on to elaborate that statement in his poem "To my Reader." In his first book, too, there was a marked concern for addressing the reader, a habit worse in poetry than it is in fiction, by which I mean totally inexcusable. He goes to it again, relishing the trenchancy with which he too boldly asserts his rugged independence of mind in a hectoring, rollicking verse of variable line length and cropped-up rhymes. He is like that "dangerous truth-teller" who, as James Simmons writes (probably about himself) "strikes again." Edwin Morgan's optimism I find agreeable but wrong; but Mr Maclean's pessimism I find wildly overstating its own case.

Too many of the earlier poems in *Waking the Dead* are crude in that brusque, energetically wrong-headed way. The series of poems dedicated to the memory of his mother are another matter entirely. They are shorter, less wanderingly blunt, more direct, more complex in feeling and a worthier manifestation of his belief in "the noblest and more profound of the great themes."

GREATER RESPECT for the forms of contemporary writing is shown by two young Irish poets, Tom Paulin[10] and Paul Muldoon.[11] Both are alert to the demands of a contemporary style as much as they are to any centralising obsession with poetry-view, moral-view, or world-view. They both also show evidence of having been influenced by contemporary poets still young, such as Derek Mahon, Michael Longley and Seamus Heaney, which I welcome: constituents of a generation whose poems have been praised, yet never quite absorbed into sensibilities dominated by a Hughes-Larkin dichotomy or by the several other put-down controversies surrounding it.

What I find particularly satisfying and hopeful in their poems is that they come without their own momentous claims of being representative of a view—without claiming, to be of the *right* style of the Age, a *properly* poetic vision, in the true vein of this-one or that-one, as evidence of their author's acumen in following the *right* American or his preferable English champion. Their fastidiousness inheres in their verses rather than any such adoption of the right attitude. Gained thereby is a necessary creative freedom. Society and breadth of experience are left open to their poems, which they inhabit rather than invade. Their poems do not intrude. Instead they assert a presence without fuss or the accompaniment of preface or theory. They do so naturally, on the assumption that the poetic exists, is not trivial, is neither beside the point nor a high affectation on the peripheries of the "public" or the "exact."

Mr Paulin is the more ambitious of the two, more deliberately so at any rate in his choice of subjects. His style is denser, his imagination darker, throwing off wry perceptions of whatever is the opposite of sweetness and light. His touch at times is heavy where it need not be, his pictures and purposes are more fraught with the disturbing intention than is generally the case with Mr Muldoon, who, in the charm of some of his poems, has been privileged to own up to a little sweetness, imparted, as it were, through a recently lost innocence.

Mules is Mr Muldoon's second book. His touch with words is delicate and coaxing; his verse moves easily from suggestion to clarity, seldom dwelling on the darkly realised images and stories which Mr Paulin's imagination creates with assurance. Muldoon's verse is the sort which flows through imagination and short narrative—what was once called "sung short story"—into a lyrical and clear resting-place. His poems are not without their reflections of what is happening in Northern Ireland. They are not so much disguised as gathered into the fine structures of his writing.

Mr Paulin's book, as its title suggests, is more deliberately public. At the same time his characteristic writing is less concerned with the limpidity typical of Mr Muldoon. Both are fine young poets. It concerns me that the present fragmentation of opinion among those who write and read poems has created a climate in which their work will find no sure body of discussion or acceptance. Having been acknowledged in certain papers or on certain programmes, even having been issued by Faber & Faber, apparently places them beyond what more than a few have defined as the pale. The longer this goes on, the irresponsibility of those who should, most of them, know better will become clearer. Some institutions and papers and programmes and publishers may look like and may well be parts of an identifiable "establishment." When it comes to poetry, and poets, it is questionable if the same conclusions can be reached quite so glibly.

[9] *Waking the Dead.* By ALASDAIR MACLEAN. Gollancz, £2.95.
[10] *A State of Justice.* By TOM PAULIN. Faber & Faber, £1.95.
[11] *Mules.* By PAUL MULDOON. Faber & Faber, £1.95.

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LETTERS

TV & Peter Jay

IT IS HEARTENING to see an article on television (Peter Jay, "The Future of Broadcasting" ENCOUNTER, April) that moves beyond the battle between the existing organisations and their would-be competitors for limited resources and discusses instead principles for a national communications policy. Unfortunately, Mr Jay's thinking still falls far short of the wider debate that is going on about this important topic. Moreover, his comments, as well as limited, are vulnerable for several reasons.

First, Mr Jay seems ignorant of the technical facts of life. He has been getting it wrong for some time now. At a recent conference in London (was it the one he describes?) he rashly forecast the same kind of technological abundance that he portrays in his article. When challenged, he could offer no proof. In the article, he offers no proof. His notions of technological abundance could be called romantic; but I am reluctant to use that word about Mr Jay. Let me just say that his prophecies are most unlikely to come true. It is likely that societies will be flooded with more, and ever more complicated, communication devices. But it is unlikely that the increase will ever enable us to satisfy our communication needs. We will always feel ourselves to be technologically limited.

Secondly, Jay's dazzling cross-media comparisons really do not work. They are handicapped by being extraordinarily selective. He does not mention film exhibited in cinema; or newspapers; or video-cassettes and video-discs; and he mentions the electronic distribution of Teletext (Ceefax, Oracle, Viewdata), and electronic mail, only in passing. He talks only about print; and a very theoretical sort of "print" too. It appears to encompass both periodicals (branded; supported by advertising; usually delivered) and books (not branded; not supported by advertising; bought singly in bookshops, *etc.*). Yet these factors (publicity and promotion; advertising revenue; and distribution) are important and the differences between them are crucial. Odd, too, is his virtual omission of radio, whose cheapness and efficiency in terms of frequency space might seem nearer than television to Jay's ideal "open" market.

It is ironic, third, that the big organisations that Mr Jay attacks so strongly do have the immense benefits of being able to cross-subsidise the kind of programming (*e.g. Weekend World*) that the producer believes is worthwhile, but which makes a loss.

Fourth, the Jay schema does not refer to current thinking about the individual's capacity to take in information. This has social and economic aspects (related to the number of channels, *etc.*) as well as important physiological aspects.

Mr Jay's thinking *is* romantic. He assumes that, one day, information will become—in terms of technological possibilities—vastly abundant. Without really questioning this idea, he constructs a highly partisan and selective theory of a national communications policy which is based on the notion of an open market in information, a notion which is most unlikely to be realised (even if desirable or needed) in any information network, let alone an electronic one. We can be thankful that Lord Annan absolutely rejected Mr Jay's thoughts (which is not to say that Lord Annan got it right, either).

JOHN HOWKINS

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London

"Who's Left, What's Right?"

CONTRIBUTIONS to your Symposium on "Who's Left, What's Right" (ENCOUNTER, February and March) have shown—if nothing else—what wildly different sorts of political animal have been and are in different places and at different times labelled "leftist" or "rightist." Yet if, for local and practical purposes, we limit our attention to Britain in the 1970s, then we find a much less complicated situation, and one in which the confusion which does obtain could fairly easily be reduced.

For usage in the media and among the men of power in the trades unions seems to be fairly clear and consistent. The expressions "right-wing" and "extreme right-wing" are in fact typically employed to denote men and movements concerned to defend and extend individual choice, and to resist monopoly and enforced equalisation. The denotation of "left-wing" and "extreme left-wing" is appropriately opposite. What would reduce the confusion, at least at this time and in our country, would be the recognition that here and now these expressions ought to be construed as having a connotation corresponding to this denotation.

When, for instance, the Social Democratic Alliance, after sending a letter to the Prime Minister expressing deep concern about the Muscovite sympathies of so many members of the TUC General Council and the Labour Party National Executive, is denounced by some of the people in question as "grouping of extreme right-wing Labour Party members" then both the SDA and the rest of us should accept that evilly intended description as a true and fair characterisation. After all the SDA do care about individual choice, and they are reluctant to see yet more and more state monopoly. Similarly when much the same left-wing spokesmen, and their friends in the media, in discussing the Thamesmead case or the recent Silkin litigation label the sponsoring National Association for Freedom "an extreme right-wing pressure group", this label too should be accepted; and understood to refer to the facts that the NAFF does indeed oppose compulsory trades union membership, the undermining of defences against Soviet expansionism, the attack on private medicine, and so on. It is also sympathetic to a vast extension of parental choice in education through education vouchers.

In a word: accept the current denotation, which we cannot hope to change; and construe the expressions as having connotations appropriate to that denotation.

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Life & Letters Today

London

LONDON LITERARY ADVICE: Don't use expressions in Latin or other foreign languages. You are sure to get them wrong. Remember that Latin is the first language of the majority of readers of this newspaper [writes Michael Leapman, Times columnist].

Don't make errors of spelling or syntax in English. Every reader is an expert grammarian, and they will all be writing furiously even before they have finished their breakfast. Yet you will not be able entirely to avoid mistakes in these areas, and when you do make them. . . .

Don't be browbeaten into climbing down. Maintain forcibly that you were right. There are usually reference works which will support any usage. I find the supplement to the *Oxford English Dictionary* specially valuable in this respect. And if even that does not work, you can always fall back on the argument that English is a living language, and that you are creating a new form for posterity. This is guaranteed to produce desirable apoplexy in hundreds of readers (but remember it is a hard argument to sustain in the case of Latin).

THE TIMES

New York City

PRESS SENSATIONS: *Feverish research is now under way to find out how newspapers can make themselves essential to readers again.*

The New York Times *spent $150,000 promoting two new once-weekly leisure supplements as well as its monstrous parcel of guides to hedonism and culture on Sundays. A third weekly section on fashion is planned, and perhaps a fourth.*

The Washington Post *is worried sick about appearing too serious, according to its cheeky, exciting rival, the* Star, *and has taken to splashing poltergeist stories on its front page.*

In Detroit, an editor of The News *circulated a memo saying: "I want at least one story, preferably two or three, on Page One that will jolt, shock or at least wake up our readers.* 'Nun Charged with Killing Her Baby.' 'Prison Horrors Revealed.' *Look for sex, comedy and tragedy."*

EVENING STANDARD

New York City

SO WHAT'S NU [UN]?: One of 368 translators at the United Nations is also a fancier of typos. As a sample of the bloopers he has culled from thousands of UN documents over the years:

"The secretariat's fear of competence . . ." (Read "sphere" for "fear"). Others: ". . . support for the depraved [deprived] people of that territory"; "in pre-Revolutionary Russia, immortality [immorality] had been high"; "agreement concerning the abolition of evils [visas] and the development of poorism [tourism]"; "the working group had a number of naughty [knotty] problems to consider. . . ."

INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE

London

PO LITERACY: Can we expect literacy in our children when the legend on the yellow Post Office vans proclaims:

"Everyone should have a phone of their own."

THE TIMES

London

HOW TO READ: *One does not of course refer in the House of Commons by name to Members as "Mr Smith", least of all as "Colonel Jones" or as "Mr Robinson, QC." Instead MPs refer to the Honourable Member for Eatonswill North or the Honourable and Gallant Member for Eatonswill South or the Honourable and Learned Member for Eatonswill Central [Andrew Alexander writes].*

So when Mrs Williams, Education Secretary, referred in the House yesterday to her second-in-command as "the Minister of State, Mr Oakes," there was an amused outcry.

"Order," jeered Members, adding "Oh" and even in some cases "Oh, Oh."

The explanation was of course that Mrs Williams was reading from a prepared statement, and was reading not merely the text but also what the Civil Servants had inserted—evidently in this case to remind her who was her Minister of State. MPs listened with particular care as she continued, perhaps hoping that she might read out all sorts of interesting remarks such as, "these points should be glossed over rapidly" or "the House may swallow this if read with feeling."

It would be—surely?—not unimaginable. After all there is a story recounted with conviction that a new Minister in the Upper House nervously read out not only a parliamentary answer prepared by this department but also the Civil Servant's manuscript addition: "Not a very good answer, I am afraid but good enough for the Lords."

DAILY MAIL

Washington, D.C.

"GAY": Everything about gays seems to be in dispute. Nobody is sure why gays become gay. We don't know how openly to let gays be gay. And, gays do not know why they are called gay.

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the earliest use of a "gay"-like word for homosexuals occurred in a 1935 book, *Underworld and Prison Slang*, recording *geycat* as a term for a homosexual boy. The OED also has traced the word *gay cat* back to 1897, when it meant "young or inexperienced hobo", whence *geycat* may have developed.

A spokesmen at the National Gay Task Force in New York said another theory is that "gay" may refer to the German pronunciation of the letter "g", used as an underworld code for illicit activities, including homosexuality. Yet another theory is that the word derives from the Greek legend of Ganymede, son of Tros, the King of Troy, who was carried off by Zeus because of his beauty and became Zeus's cup-bearer.

THE NEW REPUBLIC

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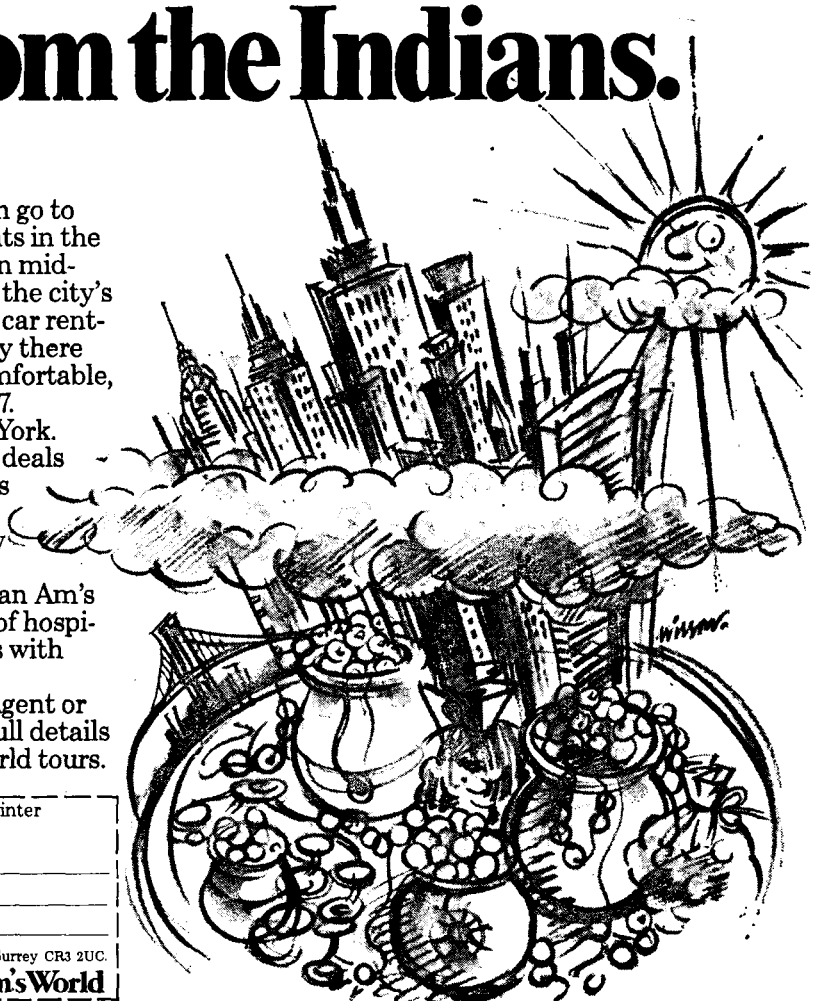

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